



At the Elevation of the Chalice.



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A

Practical Catechism ;

I N

FIFTY TWO
LESSONS:

One for every

SUNDAY

In the Year.

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TO THE READER.

WHere the Practice of the Gospel is the Subject, nothing New can be expected: to look for this here, would be to forget the Undertaking; since Novelty, which, in other cases, is so Inviting, in this is a Scandal. I propose nothing beyond the Import of the Title, which is to shew the Practice of the Gospel: there are already great Numbers of Admirable Books upon this Subject; and yet I hope the Method of this will make it both Welcome and Profitable. Question and Answer is the Method, which renders all Matters Plain and Easy, fitting them for all Capacities; and since the Faith of the Gospel is thus Generally taught thro'out the World; I cannot tell, why its Morals should not be so too; and why there should

To the Reader.

not be Practical Catechisms, as well as Speculative. This is what I propose, and accordingly have distributed the whole Matter into Fifty two Lessons, that One being Read or Expounded every Sunday, the Whole Duty of a Christian may be Examined and considered every Year, and no opportunity be given for Vice or Injustice to thrive under the Favor of Ignorance. To these are added some other Lessons, relating to the Particular States and Conditions of Christians, which may be taken in, as Circumstances shall require. And if in either Part shall be found Repetitions of what is in other Books, I hope the Reader will suspend all Censure, till he finds that General Docility in Christians, as to make Repetitions Needless, when they have been once put in mind of their Duty.



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A
Practical Catechism.

C H A P. I.

Of the Christian's Rule.

Q. **W**Hat is the Rule, which every Christian ought to follow, in all that belongs to human life?

A. The Rule, which every Christian ought to follow, is the Doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Q. Why is this his Rule?

A. Because the Christian can hope for no Salvation, but thro' Jesus Christ; and therefore the Doctrine of Jesus Christ must be their Rule, who hope to be Sav'd by him.

Q. Where is this Doctrine to be found?

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2 *Of the Christian's Rule.*

A. The Doctrine of Christ is to be found in the Gospel.

Q. Then all Christians ought to follow the Gospel?

A. This is the very thing they profess; this is what they undertake. By this they are distinguish'd from all others: And if they do not follow it, they are False to their Profession.

Q. How is the Christian to make the Gospel his Rule? Is it enough to Read it?

A. No, it is not enough to read it?

Q. Is it enough to remember it, and to be ready in citing Chapter and verse?

A. No, this is not enough.

Q. Is it enough to understand it, to be well vers'd in the Comments, and to be able to dispute upon all the difficulties of it?

A. No, this is not enough.

Q. Why is not this enough?

A. Because a person may be very learned in all this, and yet not live, as the Gospel directs.

Q. What then is he to do, to make the Gospel his Rule?

A. He is to observe all the Directions given in the Gospel, and follow them in his life.

Q. In what Particulars is he to follow them?

A.



Of the Christian's Rule. 3

A. In all that belongs to the Government of the Inward and Outward man.

Q. As how?

A. He is to bring all the Desires, Motions, and Affections of his Heart, to be examin'd by the Gospel: He is to examin his Words, Actions, Proposals, Conversation, with the whole method of his life, by the same Test; and as this approves or disapproves, so accordingly is he to proceed; never doing what the Gospel condemns, nor omitting what it enjoyns. And this is, in all things, to live by the Spirit of the Gospel.

C H A P. II.

*Of Natural Inclination and
the World.*

Q. **M**ay a Person, who has the Gospel for his Rule, follow his own Natural Inclinations?

A. No, he must not.

Q. Why so?

A. Because our Natural Inclinations are generally Corrupt, and lead us Contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel.

Q. What then must the Follower of the Gospel do?

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A.

4 Of Natural Inclination

A. He must, with a watchful eye, observe all his Inclinations: And such as are Sinful, he must with all diligence resist.

Q. And, as for such as seem to be Innocent?

A. These must be well examin'd, because they are often very Deceitful; so that seeming Innocence many times leads to the Greatest Crimes. *There is a way, that seemeth Right unto a man; but the End thereof are the ways of death. Pro. 16. 25.*

Q. And, as to the World, what must the Christian do?

A. He must be very Cautious, how he follows the World.

Q. Why so?

A. Because this is Corrupt in almost all its ways; it promotes what the Gospel disapproves, and brings all that into disesteem, which the Gospel recommends: so that whoever follows it, will unavoidably be led out of the way of the Gospel.

Q. Then the Good Christian must not love nor admire the World?

A. No; *The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. Jam. 4. 4.*

Q. Do's

Q. Do's not the Authority of the World seem very great?

A. It is certainly very great with Worldly Souls, who are always willing to think well of that, which favours their Inclinations.

Q. And is not its Authority great with others?

A. This cannot be; for they certainly undervalue it and have it in great Contempt.

Q. Why so?

A. Because the World sets up against the ways and Will of God: and while all Respect is due to him alone, must not that be contemptible, which stands against him?

Q. What then must the Christian do, as to all the ways of the world?

A. He must measure them by the Gospel, and, as far as he finds them Contrary to what is there prescrib'd, he is oblig'd to depart from them, whatever be the Authority of Number or Custom, that pleads for them.

Q. Is not this the way to be Singular?

A. It is the way to do like Few; and this can be no reproach, since you know who says, there are but *Few Chosen*.

Q. Must not they, who do thus, in resisting their own Inclinations and the

6 *Of Natural Inclination*

World, live under the exercise of great Self-denials?

A. This cannot be helpt, where Nature and the World are so corrupt. And therefore *Self-denial* is the Necessary Condition of Christ's Disciple. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow me.* Luk. 9. 23.

Q. Then the Gospel is to be follow'd, whatever the Difficulties be?

A. I know no remedy. The Gospel is such, as Christ has given us; and he being the Only Guide to Salvation; we must either go his way, or not at all.

Q. Upon the whole then, what must the Christian do?

A. He must take all his measures of what is lawfull and unlawfull, Just or unjust, right or wrong, safe or dangerous, edifying or scandalous, Good or Evil Spiritual or carnal, from the Principles and Rules deliver'd by Jesus Christ in the Gospel, and accordingly he must govern his whole life.

Q. If this be the way; will you now descend to Particulars, and running thro' all the Circumstances of human life, tell me, how the Gospel directs? You have been often instructed in these Lessons; now let me hear what you remember?

A. This

A. This is a Difficult Task; but at your Command, I will do my best.

C H A P. III.

Of Cloths.

Q. **W**Hat Directions do's the Gospel give in this point?

A. It expresly advises all to be content with such Cloths, as Necessity requires, for Covering us: *Having Food and wherewith to be cover'd, with these let us be content.* 1 Tim. 6. 8.

2ly, It commends S. John Baptist, for not being *Clothed in Soft Garments, in Costly apparel and Delicacies* Luk. 7. 25. But for having *his Garment of Camels hair, and a Girdle of a Skin about his loins.* Mat. 3. 4.

Q. Do's the Gospel any where discourage from the use of Rich Apparel?

A. It seems so to do in the case of the Rich Glutton; where having shewn his unhappy fate, of being cast into Hell, and the occasions of this his unhappiness, it is particularly observ'd, that he was *Cloth'd with Purple and Silk or Fine linnen.* Luk. 16. 19.

Q. Is there any thing, in this point, particularly directed to Women?

B. 4.

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A. Yes, the Two Great Apostles S. Peter and S. Paul Speak to them in particular: Advising them to set forth themselves with the most winning Ornaments, and telling them, what these Ornaments are.

Q. As how?

A. S. Peter giving direction, how a Believing Wife may gain an Unbelieving Husband, says thus: *Whose adorning let it not be that Outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that, which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a Meek and Quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, Subject to their own husbands. 1 Pet. 3. 3.*

Q. What do's S. Paul say on this Subject?

A. The very same; but only, that he expresses himself more positively by way of precept, and addresses it to all women: *I will — that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and Sobriety: Not with broder'd hair, or gold, or pearls, or Costly array: But (which becometh women professing Piety) with good works. 1 Tim. 2. 8. 9.*

Q. What

Q. What is the Substance of these words of the Apostles?

A. That Women ought not to seek the Outward Ornaments of Riches and Art; but the Inward Ornaments of a Sober, Modest, Meek and Quiet mind, abounding in good works.

Q. Is not this very hard Advice?

A. All the Rules of the Gospel are hard to Corrupt Nature, and to a Worldly Spirit; and the more Corruption is Strengthen'd the more Averse it is to what the Gospel directs. But the Question is, Whether it be not the best Advice?

Q. How is it the best advice?

A. Because it directs them to make use of such Ornaments, as are, of all, the most valuable; and such alone, as are capable of raising them highest in the esteem of all, who know, what really deserves esteem.

Q. How is this?

A. It is thus; That there is nothing of Real Worth from Outward Ornaments, since under these there may be all, that is vile and Contemptible; and these may be set on the Beast, as well as the Man. But, as for the Inward Ornaments of the Mind, they have a Real value in them, such as makes the Possessors

sessors truly Honourable before God and Man.

Q. But tell me; are Outward Ornaments forbid to the Christian?

A. The words of *S. Paul* seem to have the force of a Precept; but where this is not granted, yet still it must be own'd;

First, That all such Outward Ornaments are Forbid, which Immodesty contrives, and advises; as most effectual for drawing others into a Snare.

2ly, That all such Outward Ornaments are Forbid, which are Solicited by a vain, Wordly, Ambitions or Envious Spirit.

3ly, That such outward Ornaments are forbid, which in their Immoderate Expence, are an Injury to Family or other Obligations of their Condition.

In these and other like Cases, it cannot be question'd, but Outward Ornaments are Forbid, as being the Suggestions of Sin.

Q. But what is to be said in other Cases?

A. In other Cases let it be considered; First, That the Body is the Prison of the Soul; and whether that Soul seems not to forget it self, which is eager in magnifying its Chains. 2ly, That
Cloaths

Cloths are the Argument and Consequence of Sin; and whether it be reasonable to seek Satisfaction in that, which ought to be our Confusion. *3ly*, That the General motives for more than necessary Expence in Cloths, are *Self-love or Compliance with the World*: And whether it can be commendable in a Christian, to hearken to these, when he is requir'd to *Deny himself*. Luke. 9. 23. And *Not to be conform'd to this World*. Rom. 12. 2. Lastly, That Alms being so helpful to Salvation, and to be given of that, which is Superfluous; Whether it can be Christian Wisdom to put Superfluities on the Back, which might be turn'd to so much better an account. Let these points be duly consider'd, and some Judgment may be made of all Fondness of Outward Ornaments, even where no Sinful Passion pleads for them.

Q. What is now to be Concluded from this Chapter?

A. It must be concluded, as Evident from the plain words of Scripture; First, That Plain and Cheap Clothing is most agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel; even that, which comes nearest to what Necessity demands, in Covering from shame and Cold.

2ly, That expensive Ornaments are often very Sinful, and Seldom fail of being the Effect of some Weakness; and therefore are more Conformable to the Spirit of the World, than of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, That with this Condemnation of Pride and Folly, must not be confounded, what Prudence may require in some particular Occasions, and what Circumstances of Condition may demand without a fault; neither is Pride to take advantage of what is here allow'd to Prudence: If it do's, I desire to be no Party, but enter my Protestation and Declare against it.

CHAP. IV.

Of Eating and Drinking.

Q. **W**Hat Directions do's the Gospel give upon this Subject?

A. First, It condemns all Revelling, Rioting and Drunkenness.

Q. Where are these condemn'd?

A. Luk. 21. 34. *Take heed to yourselves, least at any time your hearts be overcharg'd with surfeiting and Drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon*

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upon you unawares. Then Rom. 13. 12. Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light; Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness; not in strife and envying, but put ye on our Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. Again Gal. 5. 19. The works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery — Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like; of which I foretell you, as I told you before, that they, who do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Lastly, 1 Cor. 6. 9. Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, — nor Drunkards, nor Revilers — shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

Q. This is plain and positive enough as to this point: what farther Directions do's the Gospel give?

A. It commends and advises great Moderation in eating and drinking: As in S. Paul, above cited; Having Food and wherewith to be cover'd, with these let us be content. 1 Tim. 6. 8. Again, in setting Temperance amongst the Fruits of the Holy Ghost. Gal. 5. 23. And Teaching us, that denying ungodliness

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godliness and worldly lusts, we should live Soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

Q. What farther do's it advise us upon this Subjects?

A. It gives us many hints, that Fasting is a Profitable Exercise; serving for many good purposes of a Christian life.

First, As one Practice of Virtue; *Anna departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fasting and Prayer, night and day. Luk. 2. 37. Let us approve our selves, as the Ministers of God, in much patience, — in labours, in watchings, in fasting. 2 Cor. 6. 4.*

2ly, As a proper Means for overcoming the Devil; *This kind (of devil) goeth not out, but by prayer and Fasting. Mat. 17. 21.*

3ly, As moving God to Particular Mercies: *As they minister'd, and Fasted the Holy Ghost said; Separate me Saul and Barnabas unto the work, whereto I have call'd them. Act. 13. 2.*

4ly, As effectual for obtaining Particular Grace and protection; *And when they had Fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. Acts. 13. 3. And when they had ordained them Preists in every Church, and had prayed with Fasting, they commended them to our Lord. Act. 14. 22.*

Q. What

Of Eating and Drinking. 15

Q. What now is the sum of this Chapter?

A. 1st. That Excess in eating and drinking, as Gluttony and Drunkenness, are absolutely forbid by the Gospel, and declar'd to be Sins to Damnation.

2^{ly}, That Moderation in eating and drinking, such as comes nearest to Satisfying the Necessities of Nature, is most agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel.

3^{ly}, That Fasting is commended by the Gospel, as a most Christian Exercise.

Q. If this be the Truth of the Gospel, what must be said of those Christians, who frequently commit Excess in Drinking?

A. Has not *S. Paul* said, that *Drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*? And what need then of any farther Answer to this Point?

Q. What must be said of those, who study to please their Appetite in all its demands; and for this end, have their Tables furnish'd with all that is Rare and Costly; and never think themselves more happy, then at such Entertainments?

A. I find nothing of this approv'd in the Gospel; it is not taught by Jesus Christ, and therefore can be no part of a Disciple.

Q. Bnt

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Q. But is it forbid ?

A. It is not according to the Spirit of the Gospel, and that's direction enough for those, who are serious in the Profession they have made, of following Christ.

Q. And must not those then, that are serious Christians, make any Entertainments ?

A. This is nowhere forbid ; and, in many cases, it may be commended ; as when it is, for the Support of Neighborhood, Friendship or Charity. But then this ought ever to be with these Conditions of *Moderation* and *Sobriety*. For when the Expence is Extravagant and Vain, and Intemperance is encourag'd or tolerated, then such Entertainments are sinful.

Q. What then is to be said of those, who invite Guests and take pains to make them drunk ? And, as for their Servants, think it an affront, if they go away Sober ?

A. I can tell what to fear of these ; That they are given over to a reprobate sense : but what to say to them, I cannot tell ; except, that they would learn to Believe in God ; for this they have yet to learn.

Q. What

Of Eating and Drinking. 17

Q. What Guests make the most Christian Entertainment?

A. The Poor, the maim'd, the Lame, the Blind. So Christ has declar'd; *when thou makest a Feast, call the Poor, the maimed, the Lame, the Blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompence thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the Just.* Luk. 14. 13.

CHAP. V.

Of Furniture

Q. D O's the Gospel give any Directions, as to this Point?

A. Those, who are willing, will find enough in the Gospel, for their Direction.

First, S. Paul gives this Advice; *Let your Moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand.* Phil. 4. 5. and in this, requiring all things to be done with moderation, excepts against all, that is Extravagant.

2ly, Vanity, Pride and Ambition being forbid in the Gospel, all that must be forbid, which grows from these Stocks; and consequently, that Furniture cannot be approv'd, which in the Providing, has these for Council.

3ly,

3ly, It being a Rule in the Gospel, *To seek first the kingdom of God; and that God in all things may be glorified thro' Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. 4. 11. the Christian may easily offend against this Rule, when he is at great expence in such things, which have no relation to the kingdom of God, and in which God is not glorify'd.

4ly, God having manifested his Will, that he will call all to an *account of their Stewardship*, and of the *Talents* entrusted with them; there may be a great Offence in prostituting money to the Service of Curiosity, Vanity or Humor, which might have been employ'd in the comfort of the Poor, Relief of the Distress'd, and other ways of glorifying God and doing good to our Neighbour.

5ly, It being declar'd the Duty of all Christians, *to live and walk by the Spirit of Christ*; and it being evident, that Pomp, Ambition and Prodigality belong not to the spirit of Christ, but of the World; it must be confess'd, that in many Purchases, a Christian may depart from the Spirit of Christ, and be led by another, which is at enmity with him.

Q. I hope Conveniencies will be allow'd.

A. To provide *Necessaries* is the First Care, and then *Conveniencies*: nay, where there is Sufficient, so much Cost may be allow'd, as to make Home Pleasing; but then it must be pleasing to *Reason*, and not to all, that a *boundless Curiosity* or *Ambition* can demand. For there is so much of Prodigality in these, that in extravagance and wast, they can compare with the worst of vices; and yet tis often with so much colour of Reason, that they seem to ask nothing, but what has some great Convenience or Use to plead for it.

Q. What then do you advise?

A. I advise all that have Money to Study well themselves, and not to take all that for Reasonable, which presents it self under this Cover. It is very easy being Partial, where they judg of their own Inclinations; and great Prodigality may be justify'd with the Title of Decency and Want. Wherefore all these have reason to examin their Desires, that so they may not spend unprofitably, what, with better management, might be their Soul's everlasting Comfort. A review of their Accounts would soon inform them, whether this Advice belongs to them, or no.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

Of Conversation.

Q. What is the Christian to observe in point of Conversation?

A. He is to give proof of what he is, in all Occurrences of human life, and particularly in Conversation.

Q. Where is this enjoyn'd?

A. The Will of God is declar'd by *S. Peter*: *As he, who has called you, is holy; so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation; Because it is written: You shall be Holy, because I am holy. 1 Pet. 1. 15.* Again; *You are a Chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a purchas'd people; that you may shew forth his virtues, who from darkness hath called you into his marvellous light: Which sometimes were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now having obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from carnal desires, which war against the Soul. 1 Pet. 2. 9.*

Q. What is particularly commanded in this?

A. That Christians be Holy in all manner of Conversation: and this for several Motives: First, because they belong

belong to God, whose Holiness ought to be the Model of theirs. 2ly, Because they are his Peculiar Choice. 3ly. Because they partake of Christ's Priesthood, and ought to become Victims sanctify'd to God. 4ly, Because they are the price of Christ's blood. Lastly, because, by the particular effect of God's love, they are call'd from darkness to advance toward the light of eternal Glory. Upon these Motives of Gratitude and Love, ought Christians to be ever on the Guard, so as, even in Conversation, to give proof of that Holiness, which, upon so many titles, belongs to their Profession.

Q. In what manner is this to be practis'd?

A. First, so as not to speak or do any thing, which may be the Occasion of Offence or Scandal to such, as are present.

Q. Where is this forbid?

A. In many places of the New Testament: *He, that shall Scandalize one of these little ones, that believe in me, it were better for him, that a Mill-stone were hang'd about his neck, and he drown'd in the depth of the Sea. Wo to the World because of Scandals; for it must needs be, that Scandals come; but nevertheless, wo*

to that man, by whom the Scandal comes. Mat. 18. 6. *We beseech you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain, — Giving no Offence to any man.* 2 Cor. 6. 1, 3. *Whether ye eat or drink, or do any other thing; do all things unto the glory of God. Be without offence to the Jews and to the Gentils, and to the Church of God.* 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Take heed lest perhaps this your liberty becomes an offence to the weak. — For sinning thus against the brethren, and striking their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat scandalize my brother, I will not eat flesh, while the world standeth, least I scandalize my brother.* 1 Cor. 8. 9. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* 1 Thel. 5. 22.

Q. And is this care to be General, so as to give Scandal to none?

A. S. Paul has so declar'd, as now cited. *Be without offence to the Jews, and to the Gentiles, and to the Church of God, and to the Weak brethren:* Here all are included. But S. Peter doubles the Caution in respect to Unbelievers: *Having your Conversation Honest amongst the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you, as evil-doers they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* 1 Pet. 2. 12.

Ha-

Having a good Conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be asham'd, that falsely accuse your good Conversation in Christ. 1 Pet. 3. 16.

Q. In what other manner is the Holiness of Conversation to be practis'd?

A. Not only in avoiding what may give Offence, but likewise in being Careful to do all to Edification.

Q. Where is this Enjoyn'd?

A. In many places of the New Testament. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Mat. 5. 16. Let us follow the things, that are of peace, and the things, wherewith one may edifie another. Rom. 14. 19. Let every one of you please his Neighbor unto good, to his Edification. Rom. 15. 2. Let all things be done to Edification. 1 Cor. 14. 26.*

Q. If this be a duty enjoyn'd, what is to be thought of those, who in their Conversation generally give offence to their Neighbor, either in Words or Actions: by swearing and other Prophecations; by making a Jest of what is Sinful; by Immodest Words or Gestures; by invitations to evil in any kind, or by extravagant Passions?

A. Christ our Redemer has spoke plain

plain enough of these, in the *Wo's* pronounc'd against such, as *give Scandal* to any, that believe in him; and declaring it better for them, that, with a mill-stone about their neck, they were thrown into the sea.

Q. In what consists the evil they do?

A. In being the Instruments or Ministers of the Devil, and setting up for his Interest, for the damnation of those souls, for whom Christ has shed his blood, This is the Extremity of all evils. Besides this, their general practice lays a scandal upon Truth, renders many averse to it, and makes the Enemies of God and his Truth to blaspheme. Thus are they many ways the Hindrance of Salvation to all such, as follow their ill Example, or are by them drawn into sin, or take occasion from them to blaspheme the ways of God.

Q. Where has God shew'd his displeasure against those who hinder others, or by their ill Example, put them out of the way of Salvation?

A. A lively Figure of this may be in the people of *Amalek*, who lying in wait for the Children of *Israel*, and stopping them in their way to the land of Promise, so provok'd the anger of God,

God, that he Commanded them to be utterly destroy'd, without sparing man or woman, Infant or suckling Ox or sheep. *1 Sam. 15. 2.* How much Severe then must their Judgments be, who lay Snares for their Neighbour and put him out of his way to Heaven?

C H A P. VII.

Of Recreation or Divertisements.

Q. **W**Hat Rule may be Safely observ'd in these?

A. The Gospel, which trains up Disciples of the Cross, gives no Rule for Divertisements. But however some are permitted, tho' not prescrib'd.

Q. How far then is permitted?

A. As far as is necessary for health, and for the releif of the Body and mind. These cannot be always employ'd, and therefore so much Relaxation is to be allow'd, as may prepare them for new labour.

Q. Are there any Conditions to be observ'd in this matter?

A. Some are already hinted; That Divertisements be us'd with *Moderation*, and be directed to a good End, as for
C health

health or a necessary recruit of the Spirits. There are Two other Conditions to be added; *viz.* That they be not Sinful, nor Prejudicial to the Soul or Body. The Heathens had no Restraint in following what pleas'd them, and therefore had there Divertisements mixt with all manner of excesses, with all that was Dissolute and Brutish, being given up, as *S. Paul* says, to a *Reprobate mind.* *Rom. 1. 28.* Christians are not to do thus; nor even divert themselves with what is Dangerous; for it cannot be Reasonable, to make that their Pastime, in which is hazarded either the present life or Eternity. Who ever play'd upon Precipices, but Madmen?

Q. What Recreations are to come under this head?

A. All that have any thing Disorderly in them, whether in keeping ill hours, or in ill Company, or hazarding too much; and all such as are accompanied with great Temptations, as in Balls, Plays and many other Public Meetings, where the Liberties and other Circumstances, are such, as if all had been bespoke for the Devils Service.

Q. Are any others to be reckon'd under this head?

A. All

A. All such, tho' otherwise Innocent, in which Persons spend so much time, as to Neglect their Business, or any Obligations of their State, or of their Soul. And likewise such, which Persons follow, contrary to their Command, under whose Care they are.

Q. Are there still any others?

A. All those, in which persons use some fraud, to their Neighbours loss; or being expert at any Game, draw in others, who are Unexperienc'd, to venture more than is fitting, and thus take advantage of their Rashness, to their considerable prejudice; for this is nothing better than Cheating, and very far from that Gospel-Rule, of doing, as they would have others do to them.

S. II.

Of Immoderate Divertisements.

Q. IF there be so many ways of offending in Ordinary Divertisements, what is to be said of those, who make Divertisements the great business of their life, and do little else, besides changing from one Pastime to another?

A. If we suppose the Divertisements

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to be most Innocent in themselves; yet such a life cannot be Innocent.

Q. Why so? Where is the Offence?

A. First, In not obeying the Precept of Christ, who commands all to *Watch*; and repeats this so often, that its Necessity for Salvation cannot be question'd. Now it is evident, the Christians, you mention, do not watch, as is precrib'd, whose life is a perpetual Dissipation, and who are so far from being Watchful in the concern of Eternity, that their Thoughts are scarce to be esteem'd Serious in any thing.

2ly, In not *Denying themselves*, as Christ has enjoyn'd his Followers. For how do they satisfy this Precept, who have only One Solitude, and that is, how to please themselves?

3ly. In daily improving in themselves a *Worldly Spirit*; in wilfully exposing themselves to endless *Temptation* and *dangers*; in flattering their own *Corruption*; in prodigally *wasting* what should be laid up for a treasure in heaven; in not striving to enter at the *Narrow gate*; in not Redeeming their time, nor seeking before all things the kingdom of God; nor working out their Salvation with fear and trembling; nor labouring
by

Of Immoderate Divertisements. 29

by Good works to make their Election sure.

Infinit of these Crimes there are in this kind of life, which yet is bold enough to put in its Claim to Innocence.

Q. Are those, who follow it, so much mistaken?

A. So they are like to find it; and for the truth of this, I refer them to the Gospel. For whoever reads this, will find so many difficulties and Duties in a Christian life; so much Corruption in Nature and the World; so much Subtilty and Industry in the enemy of their Souls; So great labor and watching necessary for gaining the Victory, which belongs to a Christian state, that he must conclude all those, who seek nothing, but to amuse themselves with Change of Idleness, have little of a Christian, besides the Name; and that their whole life is a transgression of the most Substantial Rules of the Gospel.

C H A P. VIII.

Of an Idle life.

Q. **W**Hat Judgment is to be fram'd of an Idle life, according to the

the principles of the Gospel?

A. If we judge it by the Gospel, we must conclude it to be out of the way of Salvation.

Q. Where is this Judgment pass'd?

A. In several places: *Every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. Mat. 7. 19. Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; Cut it down therefore, why has it place in the ground? Luk. 13. 7. The Unprofitable servant cast ye out into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth Mat. 25. 30.*

Q. How are these words the Condemnation of an Idle life?

A. Because the Persons generally subject to an Idle life, are such, as enjoy many Blessings of Heaven, and have many Talents Intrusted in their hands; and these being so far from making an advantage of them to the glory of God or their own Salvation, that they either lay them up unprofitably, or Prodigally abuse them, to the offence of the Giver or in making them a Sacrifice to Appetite and self-love; it is but too plain, that these are the Trees without Fruit, and the unprofitable Servants; against which Sentence is so positively pronounc'd.

Q. But

Q. But if these are careful in avoiding all that is Sinful ?

A. How can this be pretended, when *Not bringing forth Fruit* of the Blessings they have receiv'd, is Crime enough, by the Rule of the Gospel, to be cast forth into utter darkness ?

Q. This is no more than an Omission.

A. And is not the Omission of Duty enough to make an Ill Christian ? Observe but the Sentence of the Reprobate, as expressly set down by Christ himself (*Mat. 25. 41.*) and you will see their Condemnation laid to no other sins, but those of *Omission*: *I was hungry, and you gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink. &c.* If then these Christians omit those Duties, which God demands of them, they cannot be truly said, to avoid what is sinful, but that they live in a State of Sin. But however their sins are not of Omission only : for there are several others, that follow in upon this.

Q. As how ?

A. Idleness leads to many Sins. They, who are subject to it, are Uneasy at all that is Serious, they have a loathing of all good Entertainment ; hence seeking to divert themselves, this must be, with unprofitable Company either at home or abroad. Such Conversation

feeds the Passions, magnifies the World, raises the value of all that is vain and Earthly, softens the Soul, accustoms it to many Disorders, gives it a familiarity with many undue liberties, puts it frequently in the Occasion of Sin. And now let those speak, who know the difficulty of being virtuous in the midst of Temptations, whether these, who are so much Weakned, and yet so generally in danger, must not unavoidably fall under a manifold guilt; especially since there is so little reason to presume of a Divine Help, where there is so very little care to seek it.

Q. Can you believe these to be so much deceiv'd? Many of them are of so good Principles, that could they imagin this of themselves, they wou'd soon change their method.

A. They unqualify themselves for being Judges in the Case. Conversing so much as they do with what is evil, makes them lose the horror of Sin; so that, if they keep out of the very depth of Scandal, they seem to have no reason for Scruple. Being fond of the World, they Judge by Principles Favorable to the world; and by these they are taught to undervalue whatever Advice would bring them nearer to the Gospel, as not be-

belonging to those, who live in the world. Being seldom Serious in considering the Obligations of a Disciple, or the things belonging to Eternity, they are not capable of making a right Judgment of them: upon these reasons they are not sensible of their own unhappy State, and even then are posting on in the way of eternal misery, when they see nothing sufficient to question the Innocence of their lives.

Q. If this be a just Judgment of persons who live an idle life, what would you advise them to do?

A. I would advise them to employ themselves?

Q. As how?

A. There is no state of life, but has some employment annexed to it, even by the Order of Justice. Persons of Estate, ought to look after their Estate, see how it is manag'd, whether capable of Improvement, take and examin accounts, &c. For want of this Inspection, they are often great losers, and do wrong to their Generation. Persons, who have Family or Children under their care, have in this business enough. Every day brings its work with it; and tho' they have many good Servants; yet if all be left to Deputies,

there must be variety of Miscarriages, while they presume all go's well. Those then of this State, who think they have nothing to do, either trust too much to others, or have not yet begun to think, what their Obligation is; and this is not to want employment, but to be wanting to it.

Q. But what of Young Persons, whose good circumstances excuse them from labor?

A. These have enough to do, to prepare and fit themselves for the State of life, in which they are to be engag'd. There are variety of qualifications for every State, and these ought to be learn'd before hand. An Idle Person can be fit for no State, and therefore one thing, which all are to learn, is *not to be Idle.*

Q. How is this to be learnt?

A. A Good Temper learns it with ease, and Good Parents make it easy to all Tempers, by Practice and the exact observance of good Discipline.

Q. But if Youth for want of good Discipline, have a dislike of all employments?

A. They must supply the want of better education by their own Reason, joyn'd with the advice of Friends.

Q. As

Q. As how ?

A. They are first to convince themselves of the mischiefs of Idleness, and then resolve to begin a new method, and break off all ill Customs: They are to rise something earlier in the morning, and by degrees defeat that ill custom of Sleeping away the best part of the day. They are to have a Set time both Morning and Afternoon, for Praying and Reading in some book of Instruction; and this is an Exercise very necessary for them, for possessing their minds with the true ideas of all things belonging to this world and the next; for teaching them to value what is really valuable, and to despise what is really contemptible. They are likewise to task themselves, both morning and afternoon, with something, that may be business to them; choosing, at first, what is most agreeable, and beginning with moderation, so to come on by degrees to what may be of more advantage to them.

They are not to renounce all Recreation; for such violent heats are to be suspected, as not likely to last; but however they ought to break off those Divertisements and that Company,
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Which have engag'd them most in Idleness; for these being the very things, which have fed their Distemper, all Indulgence here must be a contradiction to their present design; and to keep on with these, while they resolve upon amendment, is to roll in the mire, and resolve not to be dirty. These then must be chang'd; and tho' for others less agreeable, yet it being for their good, this is more for their purpose, and the reasonable part ought to take place.

Q. Is not the difficulty of what you prescribe likely to hinder the Practice?

A. Medicines are seldom agreeable; but if a Distemper requires them, they must be submitted to, as being not so bad as the Disease. Idleness is the Highway to Hell, and it is worth any ones labor, to get out of it. If then there be some difficulty in what I propose; yet since I speak not to Brutes, but to Persons of Sense, of Reason and of Faith, I may expect to be heard, since it is for their eternal good, who are to go thro' this Cure. If they are sensible of their unhappiness, they will approve of the Remedy.

Q. What

Q. What now is the Summ of this Chapter?

A. That an Idle, Unprofitable life exposes the Christian to many Temptations and Dangers.

2. Brings him under the guilt of many sins, in the neglect of the greatest Duties, in making his life a Sacrifice to Self love, in wasting his time, in wasting his money &c. and all this, while he falsely believes himself Innocent.

3. That it is not a Christian life, but contrary to the great design of the Gospel; and therefore is punish'd with eternal death.

4. That all in this unhappy way, are bound to begin a new method. That Persons of all Conditions have some employments annex't to their State; that, if they have no necessity of working for bread, yet Salvation makes some employment necessary for them. That Idleness in Youth is the beginning of a Vicious life. That to teach them to love employment, is more Valuable, than to make them Great Fortunes. That Idleness soon consumes a Great Estate; but an Industrious Temper finds Happiness in a Moderate one.

C H A P. IX.

Of Visits.

Q. **I**S it allow'd to make Visits ?

A. This is not to be made a question. *Business* sometimes requires it, Sometimes *Civility*, Sometimes *Charity*. And where these are the Motives, it is not only allowable to make and receive Visits, but likewise Good to do it. Nay, many times it becomes an Obligation, where the Omission is likely to give Offence ; and if there be Self-denial in it, it is still the better action.

A. But if Persons are Fond of giving and receiving Visits ?

A. There may be a great fault in this. For this may be the effect of Idleness, when Persons not knowing how to employ their time, contrive, by this way, to help it off their hands. It may be the effect of Vanity, when Persons having a good opinion of themselves, are fond of this method, so to encrease the number of their Admirers. It may be the effect again of Pride, because they think there is something in this, that looks Great. It may be the effect of a Gossiping temper, which thus feeds it self, and has
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the fairest opportunity of knowing all, that passes. Now if any of these or other like Corruption lies at the root, the Fondness of Visits must certainly be evil; and the Gospel can no more allow of them, than of Idleness, Vanity and Pride, which are the Promoters of them.

Q. But as for Persons, who have no reason to Suspect themselves in any of these particulars, need they be under any restraint?

A. These are very powerful in some breasts, where they are not suspected; and a Complication of all these Ingredients makes up that *Worldly Spirit*, which is almost inseparable from a Fondness of these Interviews. Wherever therefore the Affections are with eagerness bent this way, there cannot fail of some of this Corruption being at the bottom, tho' it may lie undiscern'd, to those especially, who are not willing to see it.

Q. But may we not hope there are some (among those, whose circumstances oblige them to Visit) who are not under the influence of these evils: And What of these?

A. These, in the first place, ought so to manage or lessen their Visits, that
they

they become not the Business of their life, and devour all that time, which should be better employ'd.

2ly. They ought to be Watchful against all that Corruption, which is ever ready to take the advantage of Circumstances so favourable to it; and even then renounce the Spirit of the World, when outwardly they joyn with it: Following the advice of the Apostle, in so using the World, as if they us'd it not.

3ly, Since the common Subject of Discourse, in time of Visits, is Unprofitable, vain, and often very Sinful, in a flattering Compliance with the most Unreasonable and Unjust passions of others, or in rashly and uncharitably, commenting upon the absent: Since here are unadvisedly spoke such words, which often lay the grounds of great Dissensions, and other considerable Inconveniences. Since here Piety is often ridicul'd, and every Prophane or Atheistical Humour takes the freedom, which ought to be the abhorrence of every Christian ear; since here is applauded and admir'd every thing, that the World admires, without any regard to what the Gospel teaches: Good Christians ought not to go to such meet-

meetings, but as Persons do to Infested places, with great apprehension of the danger, and providing against it in the best manner they can; and therefore, before they go, ought to beg, in prayer, the particular protection of the Divine Grace, for the government of all their Senses, of their Eyes, their Ears, their Tongue; that they may not offend in any kind, either by Lightness, Rashness, Passion or Indiscretion; and that they may not joyn in any Discourse, that can be prejudicial to the Gospel, to God, their Neighbour or their own Souls in any degree.

Lastly, At their return home, they ought, on their knees, humbly to beg pardon, for whatever guilt they may have Contracted, thro' want of due care, and beseech God to prevent all ill effects of their oversights, Passion or Indiscretion: As likewise, by his Grace to prevent the mischiefs of whatever they have heard or seen, that their hearts may not admire what is vain, nor give admittance to any Maxims, which are not according to the Gospel.

Q. Have you any farther direction on this Subject?

A. That

A. That Good Christians, in all their Visits, would observe, how much pains and money it costs most people in the Service of vanity and the World, and hence be asham'd, that they themselves take so much less care in the Service of God. That they lament daily, to see, how the Professors of the Gospel strive to out do one another in going farthest from it, and place their great Satisfaction in things disapprov'd by it. And that they remember, how much more to their purpose it is to visit the Widow, the Poor, the Comfortless, the Prisoner and the Sick, than to go to those Schools of Vanity, which can Scarce be an advantage to any, but to those, who have the Art of drawing good out of evil.

C H A P. X.

Of Company.

Q. **H**AVING spoke of Visits, what Rules have you, as to the choice of Company?

A. Some ought to be observ'd: As *first*, not to be hasty in the Choice; especially, where there is likely to be any Freedom of Conversation or Friend-

Friendship: because the Looks and Meen are often great Cheats, and the Inward Disposition of mind is not always answerable to what appears without.

2ly, To make choice of Company by Reason, and not by the Eye, Inclination or Passion. One may like those best, which may be very prejudicial to him. Affection is blind, therefore Reason is to be the Eye, and Discretion the Council.

3ly, Due examination having been made, Sufficient to know Persons: Such as are fond of a Sinful life, are not to be chosen; because these are Enemies to God, and of ill Example, and therefore to be avoided.

4ly, Those, who are of a Worldly Spirit, and an Undisciplin'd life, are not to be chosen; because Conversation and Friendship with such, will bring Christians by degrees to approve their ways and to despise the Advice of such Friends, whose Charity cannot but grieve at the dangerous Circumstances, into which they have brought themselves.

5ly, Those, are not to be chosen, whose Principles may be suspected, and whose Virtue is not Sufficiently known;

because Freedom with such may be very dangerous. And to depend on them may be the way to ruin.

6ly, Those, who are Passionate, Indiscreet and have not a Command of their Tongue, are not to be chosen, because Friendship or Freedom with such, must soon be follow'd with vexatious troubles.

7ly, Those then alone ought to be made choice of, who are of Good Principles, Exemplar and Virtuous; whose Conversation may be edifying, whose Experience may be Instructive, and whose Prudence may be Serviceable in any Friendly part. So that while a Christian ought to be Civil to all, and never shew any dislike or Uneasiness, when he meets with those, who are disagreeable to him; yet for Familiars and Friends, he ought to chose only such, who have these good Qualities to recommend them.

Q. But if Persons find no satisfaction in such Company?

A. They are in the greater want of it. To find no relish in what is Good and Wholsom, is an argument of some Indisposition; and as such must not eat Poyson, because they have no tast of wholsom meat; so neither ought Christians

istians to chose always by what they like best; but to chose that which is best, and bring themselves by degrees to a liking of it.

Q. Is it not unseasonable to prescribe Self-denial on such a subject as this?

A. It may look so; but it is certainly no where more Seasonable, since the Omission of it is the readiest way to ruin.

Q. How so?

A. You may see it in Scripture; where God commanded his people, not to raake choice of the Inhabitants of the Land, to which they were going, lest it should become as a snare in the midst of them, and by this means they should be perswaded to forsake their God. *Exod. 34. 12.* It is prescrib'd likewise by *S. Paul*; *Now I have written to you, not to keep company, if any man, that is call'd a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat. 1 Cor. 5. 11.*

The reason of this Injunction is but too plain, since ill company is like a Plague; there is no conversing with them, without danger of being Infected. It is by this way all manner of wickedness spreads, and the kingdom of the devil is enlarg'd. Let but any one
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reflect upon those, who living in wickedness, have renounc'd the precepts of the Gospel, and they will find, that ill Company has been the great occasion of their unhappiness. So that a little Experience in the world is enough to satisfy any Considerer, that Self-denial is as Necessary in the Choice of Company, as in any other Case whatever.

Q. Is this to be a General Rule for all?

A. There are none, but what may have occasion for following it; since Inclination is seldom so very Discreet, as not to stand in need of Reason to correct its Choice. Do but observe, and you will soon find many Persons, otherwise Discreet enough, and yet in this very much overseen, by making choice of such Persons for their daily Conversation and Confidants, who are most improper for them; such as are too often of an ill Reputation, or of so ill Principles, as cannot fail of being prejudicial to them; and therefore look as if they had been pick'd out by an Enemy's hand, and maliciously recommended to them, with no other design, than of their ruin. Reflect but among your Acquaintance, and see how many you know of both Sexes, of all degrees and

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Conditions, who in this point are bringing mischief on their own heads and Offend both against the Rules of Prudence and the Gospel, for want of denying their Inclination, and letting this be their Guide, instead of Reason.

Q. Then it being so generally useful for all, you recommend it in particular to none ?

A. Yes, while necessary for all, it is with earnestness to be press'd to Youth, who for want of Experience, are not sensible how much both their Temporal and Eternal welfare depends on those, whom they chose for Companions. A mistake or ill Choice of these, upon their first stepping forth into the world, is many times never to be recover'd, to the disappointment of the best care, that has been taken in their Education : and of this, there are none, I fear, who, amongst their Acquaintance, are not furnish'd with melancholy Instances of their own knowledge. Here then Parents are to be watchful, as far as it is in their Power ; and Youth may be assur'd their greatest Interest of Soul and Body depends upon being well advis'd : But if, by Self-conceit or Stubborness, they abuse the liberty they have, and will not be directed, they will soon find the

the punishment of their Rashness, in their misfortunes; and then too late see their Folly, when the difficulty of retreating will confirm them in misery.

Q. If this be true, I cannot but approve your pressing it to Youth.

A. The Truth of it is evident in all the disorderly ways of Youth. And there needs no more, for making a Judgment of this age, and even of Telling their Fortune, than to see what Company they keep, and whom they make their Confidants. For in this, they first, shew what their Discretion is; for if they choose of those, who can be no advantage to them, it is plain their Wisdom is not great. Then they betray their Inclinations; for if nothing pleases them, but Vain, Idle, Expensive and Disorderly Company; If none, but Drinkers or Gamesters; If none, but Light, Foppish and unsettled brains; If none, but those, who run from one Divertisement to another; If none, but Gossiping and Busy people; if none, but newsmongers, prophane or Atheistical wits; so accordingly they make a Discovery of themselves, and give demonstration of what they are like to be.

Q. What then is your Advice to Youth, upon this Subject?

A. My

A. My advice is plain enough; that they would be very careful in the Choice of their Company, especially of those, with whom they engage in any degree of Familiarity or Friendship. That it is as much as their Souls are worth, to choose such as are Good. That they follow not Inclination, nor be deceiv'd by Flattery, but take time to know persons well, before they confide in them. That, for preventing all great miscarriages, both in this and other affairs, they would have some One Person of Piety and Prudence, with whom to advise on all Occasions; so as to undertake or resolve on no business of concern, but with his approbation. And since the Choice of daily Conversation is one business of this nature, to have his Opinion in it. The Order of Providence has given this Office of Direction to Parents; and if Youth made them their Council, the Parents would have the Comfort, and they the Blessing of it. But if there should be any just grounds for excepting against the Advice of Parents, then application ought to be made to some other Discreet Person; so to prevent those great miscarriages, which are the Fate of too many, who make
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themselves miserable, by not being advis'd.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Government of our Will.

Q. Our Will being Corrupt and naturally inclin'd to evil, how is it to be Govern'd?

A. By the Will of God; for this being every way Right, Just and Holy, it is a Certain Rule, and if we follow it, we cannot go out of the way. Since then our own Wills are Crooked, we must bend them, till they become Conformable to the Will of God, and then we cannot fail of doing well.

Q. Where is this prescrib'd?

A. In the Lord's Prayer, where Christ has taught us to say; *Thy will be done on earth, as it is Heaven.* In which words we ask, that we may do the Will of God, and not our own. And in *S. Matthew c. 7. v. 21.* Not every one, that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he, that does the Will of my Father, who is in heaven.

Q. Is the Will of God then to be consider'd in all things?

A. Yes,

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A. Yes, in all. And a Christian has no other way, but only this, of satisfying the Duties of his Profession, and of coming at length to that Kingdom, whose Possession is no otherwise to be gain'd, but by Doing the Will of God.

The Rule then is plain, which the Christian is oblig'd to follow: He is not to consult his own Will, nor consider what he loves, or hates, what he approves or disapproves, what is pleasing or displeasing to him: He is not to regard Custom, or Company, or the World, or any Convenience or Interest of this life, so as to take these for a Sufficient Warrant for Acting in any thing; but whatever is mov'd by these, must be prov'd and examin'd by the Will of God, and so far only to be approv'd and undertaken, as it is found Conformable to this Holy and Unerring Rule. This is prescrib'd by *S. Paul* in a few words: *Be not conform'd to this World, but be reform'd in the newness of your mind; that ye may prove, what is the Good, and Acceptable, and Perfect Will of God. Rom. 12. 2.* This is the Rule of all True Holiness and Solid Virtue; and whoever takes any other way, has not God for his Guide.

Q. What is the best method, for coming

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ing to the observance of this Rule?

A. Prayer and Practice. Nothing can be done, but by the assistance of God's Grace, which is to help us in our weakness; This Grace therefore must be ask'd in Prayer, with Fervor and Perseverance; and because God requires us to labour and co-operate with it, therefore we must use our daily endeavors, for subduing our Will, and bringing it to due Obedience.

Q. What are these Endeavours to be?

A. They are such, as may be serviceable to the End propos'd, of making the Will easy in bending and Complying: and this being to be effected by Practice: the Will must be accustom'd to bend.

First, By being check'd, as often, as it is inclin'd to what is Sinful and expressly contrary to the Will of God.

2ly, By having its most eager Desires examin'd, and either wholly deny'd or moderated, as often as it is bent upon what is Disorderly, dangerous or to be suspected of ill consequence.

3ly, By being often Contradicted in things indifferent; and especially in such, as are better omitted, than done.

4ly,

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4ly, By being put upon many things, to which it is naturally averse.

5ly, By doing nothing upon Humor, but still endeavoring to thwart this, as often, as it appears.

6ly, By being Easy and Silent, when reprov'd by Superiors, or Contradicted or reproach'd by Equals or Inferi-ors. And in such occasions suppressing all Swelling or other motions, which may be ready to break forth and cause disturbance.

7ly, By laying by all Disputes in defence of private Opinion, or of any thing Indifferent; and yeilding the Cause with Sweetness and Moderation.

8ly, By being Docil, Tractable and Easy in all Indifferent things, so as to do and follow what another directs, and to comply with any Proposals, where no harm can be suspected.

6ly, By resisting all degrees of Moroseness, Positiveness and Stubborness and by violence forcing the Will to bend.

By such a practice the Will may be brought under Government, so as to be, not only at the Command, but even at the beck of Reason, and in the way of a General Obedience to God, which is the Disposition of a Good

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Christian, and that, which all are bound to desire and seek.

Q. And is the want of this Practice, the reason, why so many have no Command of their own Wills?

A. The point is clear; for the Will, like a wild Beast not us'd to be govern'd, is ungovernable; and the more it is accustom'd to go without reins, the greater difficulty there must be, in bringing it under command. Hence those persons, who Study their own Inclinations, and are ever eager in Satisfying their Desires, are not in the way of the Gospel; and it must be no matter of Surprize if their lives are not according to what they profess. They, who follow a Corrupt Guide, must expect to be led out of the way; and what then must their fate be, who consult nothing beyond their own Will and Inclination, which have no one quality in them, that can fit them for Guides, being Blind, Corrupt, Deceitful and seeking nothing, but to please themselves, tho' it be with the ruin of those, who are most indulging to them?

Q. Then, I see, you are all for Self-denial?

A. I am for Governing that, which ought

Of the Government of our Will. 55

ought to be govern'd. I am for having that in Subjection, which cannot command, but with their destruction, who put the power into its hands. If it could be otherwise, I should not plead for Self-denial; but since our Natural Corruption makes it Necessary, it is much better for us to obey the Command of Christ, in Doing the Will of God, for the purchase of heaven, than exclude our selves from it, for the poor Satisfaction of doing our own.

Q. Do you then give them over for Lost, who deny not their own Wills?

A. They are not in the way of Christ, who says, except a man deny himself, he cannot be his Disciple. They are in the way of Corruption and Sin, for such is the way of Self-will. They are in the way of those, who have forsaken God, and are forsaken by him. For thus God describes his own Judgments upon the Israelites; *I gave them up to the Desires of their own hearts; and they walked in their own Counsels.* Ps. 80. or 81. If this was the sign of a Reprobate people, and a most rigorous Judgment upon them, it must be fear'd; That all they, who live in the daily indulgence of their own Desires, and are solicitous to gratify Nature and
D. 4. Sense

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Sense in their general demands, are under the displeasure of God, and are really most miserable, while they think themselves happy.

C H A P. XII.

Of Peevishness or Fretfulness.

Q. IS it according to the Gospel, to be Peevish and Fretful?

A. No; it is not.

Q. How so? Where is the fault?

A. In this; That the Gospel enjoyns Patience to its Followers, under all difficulties: it requires a Peaceable Submission under all the Appointments of God: It demands a Meek and Humble Spirit under all Provocations and Trials. Now Peevishness observes none of these Rules, but is wanting both in Patience, in Submission, in Humility and in Meekness; and therefore is not according to the Gospel.

Q. Are there any other Faults in it?

A. Yes; there is a general Injustice in it; for when persons are thus disturb'd, they very often find fault, where there is none; they chide those, who deserve it not; and thus being uneasy themselves cause an uneasiness in all.

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all about them; so that even those, who are Faithful and Industrious in their Station, have no comfort of whatever they do, but are discourag'd, while they do well. And how far this works with some tempers, it is not easy to imagin, while losing all inward Peace, they are in this disabled from performing any one duty well, which belongs to their Soul, and waste their Spirits in unprofitable amusements, which should be employ'd in better uses.

Q. And have not Fretful Persons a share in this themselves?

A. Yes; and this is another Fault; for being easily disquieted, every little accident causes a disturbance in them; so that they are no more fit to pray, as they ought, than if they were in the midst of a Mob. And what a prejudice must this be to their own Souls, whose Communication with God depends so much upon an Inward Peace?

Q. Then you do not think this Temper very edifying?

A. No, it is not edifying; it looks ill wherever it be; but it has a particular deformity in Superiors and Teachers, and lessens them in the opi-

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nion of those, who are to be directed by them. It has the same disagreeableness in persons pretending to Piety, by betraying a great Oversight and much Weakness in them.

Q. If these be the Faults of Fretfulness, what can you prescribe for its remedy?

A. I would advise those, that are subject to it, to take some pains, in considering and examining the nature of the Distemper. By this they will soon find it to be a *great Weakness* of mind, which is disturb'd with every inconsiderable trifle, that thwarts them. And this Weakness being occasion'd by a want of Courage, a want of Constancy and of that Firmness of mind, which is the great Commendation of a Rational Soul, there is in this something so *Poor* and *Mean*, that, to a Person of any Spirit, there is enough to oblige him to use all endeavours for delivering himself from the blemish of it. A Generous Soul would scorn to carry such a Reproach about with it; a Reproach, which publishes it self upon all occasions, and is so obvious, that there is nobody so dull and Ignorant, but who will point at it, and to the next comers.

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comers, make his remarks upon it. A Reproach, which discovers an Ungovern'd mind, and betrays the weakness of Sickness in time of health. This is but an imperfect character of this Infirmary; but certainly, for those, who have any value for their Good name, it must be motive enough to labour against that, which otherwise cannot fail of being a Blot amidst whatever other good qualities there may be, that may deserve commendation.

Q. What else can you prescribe?

A. I would have them consider farther, that the Spirit of the Gospel is Meekness and Humility: That among the Fruits of the Spirit, are reckon'd by *S. Paul Gentleness and Meekness*, and that it being the Apostle's Direction, that, *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* Gal. 5. 25. It ought to be the daily endeavor of all those, who profess the Gospel, and know what the life of the Spirit is, not to permit in themselves a Custom so disagreeable to it.

3ly, I would have them regard the Example of Jesus Christ, whose whole life breaths nothing more remarkable, than Meekness and Humility. I would have

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have them hear his voice, who calls upon all his Followers, *Learn of me, for I am Meek and Humble of heart.* Mat. 11. 29. and promises a Blessing to the Meek: *Blessed are the Meek; for they shall inherit the Land.* Mat. 5. 5. Now where can be the Sincerity of a Disciple, if there be not a Solitude to follow, where the Master so expressly calls?

4ly, I would have them examin, whether the difficulty of amendment in this point, be not chiefly from an ill Custom; and whether such a Custom, be Warrant enough to excuse from doing what Christ and his Gospel require. Whether such a Custom may not be overcome, where there is Sincerity and Resolution in the undertakers. Whether they can be either good Children or good Servants, who will not take the Pains for doing, what their Father and Master requires of them.

Lastly, I would have them call in heaven to their Assistance by prayer: Every Good Gift comes from God; this is one. Therefore they ought to be earnest in asking it. Their First Thoughts in the morning ought to ascend to heaven with this Petition;

Of Peevishness or Fretfulness. 61
tion; O God, give me Patience; grant,
that I may be truly Humble and Meek.
The same ought to be repeated, as
often as in the day they bend their
knees in prayer: As likewise at o-
ther times, even in the midst of all
business, such Flights of a heart rais'd
to God, would be a Seasonable In-
terruption: With the same they ought
to close their eyes at night. Such
Importunity of Prayer cannot fail of
a good effect. But then this ought
to be attended with a great watch-
fulness of mind, when Occasions offer,
and there seems danger of falling in-
to this Weakness. Then a Guard
ought to be set upon the lips, and
good endeavours us'd for keeping
the mind Compos'd. Then Fear ought
to keep Solitude awake, and the
Soul be encourag'd to be steddy and
Faithful in what it has propos'd;
as likewise threatn'd, if it be false
to its engagements, upon such incon-
siderable provocations.

Perseverance in these Particulars,
with a due Confidence in God, must
have a good effect, either in reme-
dying the evil or lessening the guilt
of it.

C H A P. XIII.

Of Anger and Passion.

Q. IS Anger at any time lawful?

A. Anger may be express'd against any thing that is Sinful or dishonorable to God. But even then it must be kept within bounds, so as not to grow into a Passion; for otherwise, it may easily become Sinful, while it is rais'd against Sin.

Q. In other cases is Anger an Offence?

A. It is generally Sinful in other cases; because it is a Passion not subject to Reason, but blinding this Light, which God has given us, and by violence and usurpation undertaking to govern us.

Q. Is Anger or Passion a great Sin?

A. Passion may easily be a great Sin, as may be seen in the ill effects of it. 1. In the Disturbance it causes in those, who are mov'd with Passion, making them unfit for all Duties. 2. In the Disturbance caus'd in those, against whom the Anger is rais'd; putting them under the like Indisposition. 3. In the breaking of Peace, which is so valuable a Good. 4.

In

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In the Scandal it gives, both in the breach of Peace, and in the Disedifying expressions, into which it generally breaks forth. 5. In the Rash Judgments and Unjust Charges or Accusations, to which Passion is subject. 6. In the great Dejections and discouragements it causes in others, to the loss of all comfort, both as to Body and Soul. 7. In the Animosities it occasions, and in often laying the Seed of Differences never more to be reconcil'd. Lastly, in being contrary to that Charity and Love, which are the Indispensible Conditions of a Christian life.

Q. What Remedies can you prescribe to those, who are subject to it? What would you have them do?

A. I would have them, in the first Place, endeavour to keep a strict silence, so as never to speak, when they perceive themselves in a Passion.

Q. How may this be effected?

A. Either by leaving the Company, and going out of the Occasion, which, in some circumstances is the best expedient: or by strength of Reason, obliging the Tongue to Silence.

Q. What is the best reason in this case?

A. Is

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A. Is it not reason enough, That Passion is always Blind, and seeing nothing aright, cannot speak to the purpose: that it is Unjust, and therefore cannot speak without doing wrong: that it is Unreasonable, and therefore cannot be trusted in what it speaks: that it is Rash, and therefore is likely to say some foolish or Indiscreet thing, which may do harm, and must afterwards be the subject of Repentance? this has so much Experience to confirm it, that, if Reason be not wholly stifled, it must shew it self, in not allowing Passion the Liberty of the Tongue; but still maintain this Post, even when it is almost beaten out of all the rest.

This Rule ought to be observ'd, even when Passion seems to have Demonstration and Justice on its side; because it is very often deceiv'd; and because it injures a good Cause by its immoderate heat, bitterness and excess; so that, whether it be in the Right or in the Wrong, it is most advisable for Passion to be Silent, and never to command the Tongue. They, who can gain this point, will find the advantage of it, in avoiding many inconveniencies, into which an ungovern'd tongue would soon bring them; and, upon the abatement of their heats, will rejoyce and bless God, for the restraint

straint they put upon themselves, in keeping silence.

This Disciplin ought to be observ'd likewise as to the Pen, so as never to take it in hand, when Passion has disorder'd the heart. Writing Letters under such disorder occasions great Inconveniencies, and has furnish'd matter for a long Repentance.

The same ought to be observ'd, as to all outward Actions, so as never to do any thing in a Passion, that is, not to reprove, nor Chide, nor strike, nor send Messages, &c. Because Passion do's nothing well. It is one of *S. Teresa's* Maxims; *Never reprove any one in anger.* And the Philosopher knew, how little Passion was to be trusted, who said to his Servant; *Now would I beat thee, were I not Angry.* A Total Cessation then there ought to be, while the mind is disturb'd with Passion.

And this so far, as even interiorly not to Resolve upon any thing in a Passion, tho' there appears never so much Evidence or Justice to press the Case. Because no Resolution ought to be taken, but upon good Advice. Now this cannot be in time of Anger, because the mind is not then Sedate, nor calm enough for Deliberation; and Reason, is then eclips'd,

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clips'd, so that what at that time appears as Reason, is not Reason, but Passion. And this ought not to be chosen for Council, but only by those, who are willing to be put upon extravagancies and set out of their way. In time of Anger then conclude nothing, Take no Resolutions: but let all Business be adjourn'd till a better season.

Q. Well, if a Person can gain this Point, so as not to say, nor do, nor write, nor resolve upon any thing, when he is in a Passion, has he in this done all?

A. In this he has, overcome the Scandalous and Indiscreet part of Anger; but still it may lie in the Breast and work to such a degree of Injustice and disorder, as to be a great sin in the sight of God, while it is conceal'd from the eyes of men. There must be endeavours then for overcoming this Part too.

Q. What motives can you produce for a Christian to take pains in overcoming it?

A. Is it not motive enough, that Christ and his Holy Gospel declare the Guilt of it, and in this shew, that it ought not to be found in his Followers? Hear what they say.

Every

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Every one, who is angry with his brother, shall be guilty of Judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council: but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Mat. 5. 22. The Anger of man works not the righteousness of God. Jam. 1. 20. Let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamor and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted. Eph. 4. 31. But now you also put off all these, Anger, Wrath, Malice—seeing that ye have put off the Old man with his deeds and have put on the New man. Col. 3. 8. And Gal. 5. 20. the Apostle sets down Anger or Wrath amongst the Works of the Flesh, of which he says; They, who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Is not this enough to make a Christian sensible of the fault and guilt of this Passion, and to oblige him to give no quarter to an Enemy, which will bring ruin to those, that favour it?

Q. But have you any other motives for standing against it?

A. Yes, many: 1. Anger is occasion'd thro' a want of Patience, a want

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want of Humility and Submission to the Will of God. Now these are so very Considerable and even Necessary in a Christian life, that no body, that has Faith, ought to sit down under the want of them.

2. There is so great a Deformity in Anger; by often leading men into great indiscretions; often into Injustice often raising Confusion, and disturbing the Peace of Families and Friends, often degrading men into the Rage of Beasts; that no body can consider it, without raising an Aversion against it, as the Dishonor and Infamy of a Rational creature.

3. There is so great Inconvenience in it, not only in rendering men unfit for all duties and Business; but likewise in discouraging Friends from giving their advice, and hints of any False Step, Oversight or Indiscretion; who will scarce venture there to speak, where a Word ill placed or tim'd, may likely provoke a Storm; that a man must look upon this Passion as the worst of Enemies, which not only robs him of his Reason, but likewise of his Friends, by making them useless to him, in a point, where they

they are capable of doing him the best Service.

Q. If passion be thus pernicious both as to this world and the next; what must a Christian do, that perceives it coming upon him?

A. He must oppose the first Thoughts of it, and give a check to the disturbance of mind, as soon as it appears. He must suppress whatever disorder he finds within, and not discover it either in Words or Looks: if the difficulty encreases, he must quit the Occasion, and seeking the first convenience of a Retirement, there on his knees bow down and humble himself under the Will of God, and pray, that by his power he will lay the Storm. Here he may consider the great Patience and Longanimity of God in bearing the Provocations of Sinners, and particularly of his own sins. And if he takes some good book into his hand and reads a Chapter, it may be a Means of hast'ning on the Calm.

Q. But if Persons try, and with all their endeavors, cannot overcome themselves, what must they do?

A. They must still continue their endeavors, and never lay down their arms,

arms, as long as the Enemy keeps the Field. If they have hether to labor'd, and without effect; before they despair, let them examin, whether they have been in Earnest; whether Solicitous and Watchful, as in a business of concern; whether they have labor'd, as in an affair of Eternity? Great works are not to be done with bare Purposing, nor with ordinary endeavors. And they must not conclude, they have done all they can; when, they have not employ'd the half part of their Care, and would do twice as much, were it a business of Money, as it is of their Souls.

Q. Then you suspect Persons of not being Sincere?

A. I do so, and have reason for it; and do not question, but when the Case comes to be tried, it will be found, that the Despair of these persons, is the Despair of Laziness; which being unwilling to labour, choses rather to conclude a Work impossible, than take pains to effect it. They have us'd some endeavors, and being to no Purpose, think this Sufficient Excuse for lying under the evil; whereas they can no more do this, than compound or make a league

league with the Devil, because after their weak defence, he still continues carrying on his Attack against them.

Let these but observe, how they can govern their Tongues, when any one is near, whose Presence awes them, or from whom it is their interest to conceal their Passion; and hence they may see, what they can do, when they have a mind to it. And then what must be the Inference, but that they might do as much for their Soul's sake, as for Humor or Interest, if they were but as much in earnest? And where is the Sincerity then of their usual Plea, That they would mend, if they could? This is no more than a Cover for Sloth, and a Pretext, that will never pass with him, who is the Searcher of hearts.

C H A P. XIV.

*Of keeping Peace; of Contentions
and Quarrels.*

Q. **O**ught Christians to be careful in keeping Peace with one another?

A. It is most certain, they ought.

Q. What reasons are there for it?

A. First

A. First, because the Gospel has set such a value upon Peace, as to promise a Blessing to such, as contribute to it: *Blessed are the Peace-makers; for they shall be called the Children of God.* Mat. 5. 9.

2. It was the Blessing, Christ gave his Apostles, upon his First seeing them after his Resurrection: *Pax vobis: Peace be unto you.* Luk. 24. 36. As he had pray'd for it before his Passion, *That they all may be One.* Joh. 17. 21.

3. It is one of the Fruits of the Holy Ghost; *Love, Joy, Peace, Long suffering, Gentleness, Meekness.* Gal. 5. 22.

4. It is the Means for obtaining God's particular Protection, and abiding always with us: *Be of one mind, live in Peace; and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you.* 2 Cor. 13. 11.

5. It is necessary for coming to the Possession of God: *Follow Peace with all men, and Holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord.* Heb. 12. 14.

6. Because God declares himself the God of Peace: *God is not the God of Dissension, but of Peace.* 1 Cor. 14. 33.

7. Because *Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings,*

vyings, are number'd by S. Paul among the Works of the Flesh; of which he pronounces this Sentence of Terror; They, who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. 5. 20. 21.

8. Because the same Apostle, sets such a mark upon Contention and Quarreling: If ye bite and devour one another, take heed, that ye be not consumed one of another. Gal. 5. 15.

For these and other like reasons, Christians are bound to keep Peace with all men, and avoid all Contentions, as much as is possible; there being no hopes of seeing the face of God, but by observing this Rule of the Gospel.

Q. Do you not think it difficult to keep Peace with some Tempers?

A. I do; but since Peace is so Valuable, and the Command of keeping it is so strict, the difficulty cannot be Sufficient Excuse for not keeping Peace. Let the Christian hear David; Cum his, qui oderunt pacem, eram pacificus: I was Peaceable with those, who hated peace. Ps. 119. 7. and by this he will find, that, whatever the difficulty be, yet still it may be done.

Q. What Means or Helps can you prescribe, for keeping Peace?

E

A. Let

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A. Let a Christian be but as the Gospel directs, Patient, Humble and Meek, and there needs no more for keeping peace. Whence you may guess at those, who keep it not, that they have not yet learnt the Gospel.

Q. But what is to be the Practice of these virtues in particular, for keeping Peace?

A. It must be under these Two Heads; First, in not giving Provocations to others. Secondly, In bearing patiently such as are given by others.

1. There must be a Government of the Tongue, in avoiding all Biting Reflections.

2. In abstaining from all Reproachful words.

3. In Observing Tempers, so as to be very Cautious before such, as are easy in taking Exceptions, at what is said.

4. In avoiding all kind of Whispering, and carrying of Stories from one another, and relating what others have said of them.

5. In suppressing all present Resentments, and stifling ill humor.

6. In not being too Positive or Hot, in maintaining any Cause.

7. In not hearkning to the Suggestions

gestions of a Jealous or Exceptious humor : but putting them by, as unreasonable, Indiscreet, and of ill consequence.

8. In putting the best Construction upon every thing, and hoping the intention of Persons, not to be so bad, as represented.

9. In giving Mild Answers to provoking and Injurious Language ; In putting by Affronts with a Jest, or quitting Company, if words grow too high.

10. In being Silent, and not seeming to Hear or Understand what was said.

11. In keeping up a good humour ; in being Easy and Moderate, or Silent, at least, when provocations are given.

12. In not being too nice in the point of Place, Title or other Ceremony.

13. In passing by all misconstructions and peevish expressions in letters, without giving them an answer.

These are some Particulars, which, if observ'd, would help very much to the preserving of Peace. Some of them may Seem difficult ; but there being not one Point, but what is the

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effect either of Charity, or of Patience, or of Humility or Meekness, there is not one of them, but what belongs to every Christian, inasmuch as these Virtues belong to all.

Q. Are there still any other Helps in this Particular?

A. It may be a great help to consider, that the Gospel allows not of one of those Occasions, as sufficient for breaking Peace, which are generally made the Occasions of it. For observe;

1. If affronts or injuries are offer'd: the Gospel commands us to forgive Injuries.

2. If we are Reproach'd or Accus'd falsely: the Gospel commands us then to rejoice.

3. If others are Uneasy or troublesome to us: our Rule is to bear with one another and forbear, and to be Patient towards all.

4. If others are malicious and do evil to us: we are commanded to pray for such, and do good for evil.

5. If any are our profess'd Enemies; the Gospel commands us to Love our Enemies.

6. If any Strike or wrong us: our Rule is, to Suffer with Patience; and

to

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to offer our selves to Suffer still more.

7. If we do well, and yet Suffer, as evil-doers, our Rule says this is acceptable with God; according to the Example of Christ, and ought to be matter of Comfort.

Whoever considers with attention these Rules of the Gospel, will find, that, however the *Carnal* or *Natural* man may think, he has many reasons for quarrelling and breaking Peace with his Neighbour, yet the *Spiritual* man or *Christian* can have none, but by forsaking the Rule, which he professes to follow.

Q. If this be so; are not Christians very forgetful of their duty, who seem to have no regard to these Rules; but let the same Occasions be sufficient to them, for breaking Peace, as to the Heathen.

A. I fear they forget their Profession: there are too many Signs of it, in their little observance of what the Gospel teaches: but especially in this point: every ordinary accident being enough for breaking peace, whereas there is scarce any thing, which can be Sufficient warrant for it.

C H A P. XV.

Of Loving our Neighbor, and living in Charity and Peace with him.

Q. **H**OW is this Precept to be observ'd, of Loving our Neighbor as our selves?

A. Christ has declar'd it in these words: *All things, whatsoever ye would, that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.* Mat. 7. 12. Thus are we to love our Neighbor.

Q. How is this in Particular?

A. Learn from your self: See, what you would have others do to you; Do that to them.

1. You would have them do you no harm; neither in Goods, or Good Name. Do then no Wrong to others, nor let fall any word to the Prejudice or Lessening of any.

2. You would have others be Civil and Respectful to you; be so to others.

3. You would have them assist and help you, in Prayers, in Advice, in what-

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whatever other Assistance, your circumstances may require; and you would have them be Sincere in what they do: Do you thus to others.

4. You would have them not to despise you for your defects, or Misfortunes, or Indiscretions; but to express a Compassion towards you, and this not only from the lips, but sincerely from the Heart: Do thus to others.

Q. There is no difficulty in doing this to our Friends, and to whom we wish well; for so far Nature and Natural Friendship teaches us: But how are we to do it to those, who have injur'd us, or are our Enemies?

A. We are to follow here the same Rule, of Doing to others, as we would have others, do to us: as in particular;

1. You would have others forgive whatever injuries you have done them: Do you so to others.

2. You would have others forget all past Disrespects or Affronts, and, notwithstanding these, to be helpful to you, according to your wants; Do so to others.

3. You would have others not give credit to whatever Stories they hear

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to your prejudice: Do you so to others.

4. You would have others put the best construction upon whatever you have said or done; and to lay to Mistake or Oversight whatever may be taken in a worse Sense: Do so to others.

5. You would have others continue their Friendly Temper to you, and over-look whatever Exceptions, jealousy might otherwise suggest: Do you so to others.

Thus you see, even as to our Enemies, Charity demands not one point of us, but what by this Rule of Nature, we are bound to observe.

Q. I see it: but how shall Persons follow this Rule, whose Nature gives them such strong averfions, that they cannot have the thought of such, whom they apprehend their Enemies, but it is follow'd close with Hatred and desires of Revenge?

A. If Nature be so Corrupt, they must labor to overcome it, and remember, that Nature is not to be their Rule, but the will of God, If they believe the Gospel to teach the way of Salvation, they must either labor to walk according to it, or else
never

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never hope for its Promises.

Q. How far do's the Gospel press this point of Loving our Neighbor, and even our Enemies?

A. It lays it down, as a Duty without exception : see what it says of it

1. Christ declares this to be his Precept : *This is my Commandment, That ye love one another* Joh. 13. 12. So that whoever keeps not this, is not to be esteem'd a Follower of Christ ; tho' he should observe all the rest.

2. He declares this to be the Particular Mark of his Disciples ; *By this shall all men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* Joh. 13. 35. so that whoever believes in Christ, and loves not his Neighbor, cannot pretend to be a Disciple of Christ.

3. He expressly requires this Love to be extended to Enemies : *I say unto you ; Love your Enemies ; Bless them, that curse you ; Do good to them, that hate you, and pray for them, that persecute and abuse you ; that ye may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven, who makes his Sun to rise upon Good and Bad, and rains upon the Just and Unjust. For if ye love them, that love you, what reward shall you have ?*

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Do not even the Publicans this? And if you salute your Brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the Heathens so! Mat. 5. 44. In these words the Command is Positive; and a Christian, who salutes, loves and do's good to his Friends only, and not to his Enemies, is declar'd to be no better than a Publican or Heathen.

4. The Apostle declares the manner, in which we are to love our Enemies: *Dearly beloved, Revenge not your selves, but give place unto Wrath; for it is written; Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thy Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.* Rom. 12. 19.

Q. The Gospel is plain; and it cannot be disputed, what our Duty is. But how great is the difficulty of putting it in practice?

A. It is not so great, as being eternally Separated from God; and therefore is the subject of a Rational Choice. There is nothing but Nature, that makes the Opposition: and what is Nature in the Christian's Account? It is Corrupt, it is sinful,
it.

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it leads from God, it is an Enemy, it is Treacherous, it destroys those, that favour it, and leads to eternal death. And is there in this any thing, that deserves to be esteem'd or valu'd? Is it not rather Contemptible, and what ought be to Fear'd and Hated by all, that know it? The First Principle of the Gospel requires us to stand against it and Deny it, to oppose and mortify it; and what then is this, to set up against God, so as, upon the account of this, we should make it difficult to do, what God himself commands us? We know how to laugh at and pity those, who forsake the Living God, and give the preference of Worship to Idols of Wood or Stone: and is not our Idolatry still more Ridiculous, if we give the Preference to our own Nature, which we confess to be Corrupt and sinful, and pay our Obedience to its Commands rather than to God's.

Q. The Unreasonableness of it is too evident: but if some cannot do otherwise?

A. So some deceive themselves, and think they cannot: but if these would but observe, how they can manage their Passions, when it is their

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Interest to do it ; how they can be Civil, profess kindness and offer service to their Enemies, and such, whom they hate ; they may hence see, that they can make Nature bend, when they think fit to do it ; and if upon a Worldly account ; why not for Duty sake ? Will not their own Actions be their Confusion in this point, and prove their Excuse to be a Lie ?

C H A P. XVI.

Of Forgiving Injuries, and being reconcil'd after Quarrels.

Q. IS there an Obligation of Forgiving Injuries, and making peace ?

A. There is : the Gospel lays this Obligation upon its Professors, Hear what it says :

1. *If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Mat. 6. 14. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Luk. 6. 37. His Lord said unto him ; O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all thy debt.*

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debt because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord being angry deliver'd him to the tormentors, till he should repay all the debt: So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts, Mat. 18. 32. So that whoever forgives not the Injuries done him by others, cannot hope for mercy from God, for the pardon of his Sins: and even that Pardon, which has been granted, will be revok'd.

2. If thou offer thy Gift at the Altar, and there remembrest, that thy Brother has any thing against thee: Leave there thy Offering before the Altar, and go first to be reconcil'd to thy Brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy Gift. Mat. 5. 23. And is there not in this a plain Declaration, that whoever is not reconcil'd with his Neighbor, can find no acceptance with God; and that if he prays, his Prayers shall not be heard?

3. Tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my Goods to feed the poor, and deliver my Body to be burnt, and have

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have not Charity, it profits me nothing.

1. Cor. 13. 2. This is positive, that without Charity, there can be no hopes of Salvation.

Here is God's Word express, that the Obligation of Forgiving Injuries and making Peace with our Neighbor, is so great, that whoever do's it not, is excluded from all Mercy; his Sins cannot be forgiven; his Prayer cannot be heard, and a Sacrifice of his Goods and Life to God, can avail him nothing.

Q. And must I judge thus severely of all those, who being at Difference, have an ill Will to one another?

A. It is the Judgment, God's Sacred Word makes of them: If they have any Appeal from that, they may have some hopes: But if that Stands good, the Sentence must be allow'd; and they have no Remedy, but in being reconcil'd and making peace.

Q. How comes it then, that so many Christians are at difference with one another, and this without any seeming Scruple; and many of these being Persons of good Principles?

A. Some of these may not be so Sensible of their duty, as they ought. Others may have their passions

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ons too strong for them. Others may be perswaded, that their Passions are Just, and that they have Reason for what they do. There may be other occasions of it in others ; but none of them are Sufficient warrant for what they do. For the Precept of Charity is Indispensible ; God's Word has so declar'd it ; and those, who think they have Sufficient reason to dispence with it, will find themselves under the Guilt of violating this great Precept, where blinded by their own Passions, they thought themselves Innocent.

Q. What then ought Persons to do, who are at Difference with their Neighbor ?

A. They have but one thing to do, and that is to remove all misunderstanding, and make peace. Thus the Gospel prescribes, and if they observe it not, their Profession is vain.

Q. How are they to remove all Mis-understanding ?

A. Where Temporal Interest makes this necessary, there never wants contrivance for effecting it. If then Persons seem to be at loss, in not knowing how to accomplish it, they must suspect themselves, as not Sincere.

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cere in the Case. See what all may do.

1. As often as they meet, they may Salute them with respect; and do it in such a manner, as to convince them, there is something more than Ceremony in it. This Art is common to all, who are Sincere.

2. They may seek occasions of speaking to them, and do it with that Easiness and Freedom, as to convince them of their Heart being free from all ill will against them.

3. They may speak friendly of them behind their backs, and to such Persons, who in all likelihood, will inform them of all that was said; and to such express Desires of being reconcil'd.

4. They may engage some proper Persons, to compose the difference between them.

5. They may contrive some way, wherein to be Serviceable to them, or to their best Friends.

6. They may wait upon them personally, and so frame their Discourse with Charity and Friendship, as to remove not only misunderstanding, but even Animosities and Hatred too.

7. They may, by Letters, prepare the way; by representing the Truth of
of.

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of things, removing Mistakes, asking pardon for whatever requires it, and making Protestations, as circumstances may direct.

Many other ways there are, proper for this purpose; but the Temper and Humor of Persons, and the Circumstances of the Case must determine, which may be most effectual: for to undertake it, without consulting this, may, thro' Indiscretion, rather widen, then close the breach.

Q. But is not there more difficulty in this than all are willing to submit to?

A. There may be opposition made by Ill nature, Stubbornness and Pride; but there are motives enough to overcome the difficulty rais'd by these.

1. He that moves first for Peace, shews himself the better Christian.

2. He gives proof of a Greater and more Generous Spirit.

3. He shews himself the Wiser man.

4. He lays the Foundation of a Good Conscience and of Solid Interior Peace.

5. He do's that, which will gain the Love and Esteem of all, that are good.

These

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These must be confess'd the Privileges of this Charity, so that Christians, instead of thinking it a lessening to them, to move first for Peace, ought to be Solicitous to do it, as a thing most Honorable, and most becoming their Profession: and to be unwilling, asham'd, or to think it beneath them to do it, is to be unwilling, and asham'd to shew themselves better Christians, than their Neighbor.

Q. Is it not something Unfashionable however to do so?

A. And this is what we ought to blush at; to see how Contemptible it is to follow the Gospel, even amongst the Professors of it. But whatever the Mode be, let it be remember'd, that they, who are asham'd of what Christ teaches, are asham'd of Christ: and he himself has said it: *Whoever shall be asham'd of me, and of my Words, of him shall the Son of man be asham'd, when he shall come in his own glory.* Luk. 9. 26. Shame therefore must not hinder the Christian from doing what the Gospel requires of him: for he, that omits his duty upon this account, cannot pretend to the Character of a Disciple.

Q. Is

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Q. Is it not enough to be willing to be reconcil'd, when the other Party seeks it?

A. And if he should never seek it, would not this be living out of Charity? The Gospel prescribes thus; *Go first to be reconcil'd to thy Brother*: and is not this more than staying till the Brother comes to him? He that refuses to make peace or to forgive, when he is Solicited to it, is certainly guilty of the greater and more Scandalous crime: but he is guilty too, who will not seek Peace and contrive to make up differences, but waits, till he is importun'd to do it: for however this may look like Charity, it has too much Pride and Stiffness in it to pass for such.

Q. Are not Persons in Charity enough with their Neighbor, if they wish him no harm, and will have nothing to say to him?

A. So some delude themselves: but what is this more, than what they do to Common Beasts: and how unlike to the Charity of Jesus Christ and his Gospel? Can that be call'd Love, and even the Love of Charity, which is only *Wishing no harm*.

Q. But is it not something, to go so far?

A. This

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A. This is nothing, without going farther: nay, in it self, it is generally Deceit: such Persons having a real Aversion or ill will, tho' something conceal'd: so that they cannot speak of such Persons, but they betray a Dislike; they cannot hear them commended, but with trouble; and it is a Satisfaction to them, to hear them undervalu'd, reproach'd or ridicul'd. Where the mind is thus affected, there is no true Charity; for these Motions, are like the Symptoms of a Disease, which discover a Distemper'd mind. It is not safe therefore to depend upon such a disposition, because it is generally deceitful. Rather this business, of renewing Charity and making Peace with a Neighbor, ought to be Subjected to the Nicest Examen; because it is often done by halves, it is done without Sincerity; it is like a False Cure, which draws a fair skin over the wound, but leaves Corruption at the bottom, which will soon break forth into a Sore.

Q. Can you suspect this Insincerity in Christians?

A. There is too much reason for it. Observe, how every little Accident is improv'd into a Quarrel, by those

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those, who after any considerable Difference, have been reconcil'd to each other. They have seem'd, and it may be, thought themselves, Sincere in what they did: but when the evil returns again, upon such very trivial provocations; is it not plain, there was Corruption, that lay conceal'd, and that the Reconciliation was not from the Heart? And yet this is the Condition, the Gospel requires; that we every one *forgive our Brethren from our Hearts*. Which, believe me, I fear, is but seldom done.

Q. How often are we to forgive those, who injure us?

A. Christ answer'd this to *Peter*: Not only Seven times, but Seventy times Seven; which seems to be without limit, as the Love of God to us Sinners was without measure: We are always to have Charity in heart, and therefore in our hearts are always to pardon our Enemies.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVII.

Of Humility, Vanity, and Pride.

Q. **W**Hat is the Solid Foundation of Humility, and the best Fence against Pride?

A. The Command of Christ and the Knowledge of our selves.

Q. What is the Command of Christ?

A. That we learn of him to be Meek and humble of heart. That we be Poor in Spirit. That we exalt not our selves. That if we humble our selves, we shall be exalted. That we do nothing thro' strife or Vain glory, but in Humility, every one esteeming others better than themselves. *Phil. 2. 3.* That we put on Humility. *Col. 3. 12.* That we teach Humility one to another; for that God resists the Proud, and gives Grace to the Humble. *1 Pet. 5. 5.*

In these plain terms has God manifested his will, and Christ laid his Command upon us. Now what better Foundation can a Disciple have, than to know the Will of his Master? Christ then Commanding us to Humble

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ble our Selves, and by Humility to seek to be exalted by him ; This must be the Rule of his.

Q. How is the Knowledge of our selves, a help to this?

A. Because we cannot truly know our selves but we must see enough to keep us Humble, and to oblige us to confess the Injustice of all Pride.

Q. As how?

A. First, we see our selves, to be Nothing of our selves ; and that whatever we have or hold, it is the Gift of God, to whom the Glory of it belongs : so that, in whatever we are distinguish'd from others, it is the pure effect of his Mercy.

2. We see Filth and Corruption in our selves, thro' the many Sins we have committed ; so that our Souls are under the pollution of a manifold guilt.

3. We see Intolerable Folly in our selves, in busying our selves about trifles, and neglecting the great Concern of Eternity.

4. We see Madness in our selves, in taken pains every day to make our selves miserable, in being delighted in Poyson and taking pleasure in things,
that

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that are for our Destruction.

5. We see a Baseness in our selves, in having a Noble Benefactor, and abusing his Benefits, to the Displeasure and Offence of him, who has bestow'd all upon us,

6. We see Rebellion and Treachery in our selves, in professing our selves Servants of God, and yet taking Self-love, the World and the Devil for our Counsel, for transgressing the Laws of God, and setting up their Interest against his.

7. We see in our selves all that is Imperfect, Mean and Contemptible; Blindness, Lameness, Deafness, Inconstancy, Uncertainty, Ignorance, Rashness, Stupidity, Sottishness, Insensibility.

Lastly, we see amidst all these Characters of Misery and Unworthyness, a Strong Inclination to love, admire and Magnify our selves, we would have all others to believe us to be something worthy of esteem, and are even Angry if others do not express a value for us.

Now, who is there, that knows himself, and sees all these Humbling Ingredients, but must confess he is a Poor, Unhappy Creature, that deserves

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serves to be despis'd by all, and that there cannot possibly be a more notorious Injustice, than to value himself, and to contrive all means for making others believe him to be valuable? Here now is a Solid Foundation laid for Humility, and a Sure Fence against Pride.

Q. How is this to be put in practice?

A. Whoever Studies Seriously the Commands of Christ, and is fully possess'd with the true Knowledge of himself, cannot fail in seeing the Practice.

First, he sees an Injustice in setting forth this Criminal Clay, as Honorable or valuable to the World; and therefore either retrenches all Unnecessary Ornaments, Magnificence at Table and Pompous Attendants; or if Prudence obliges him to some degree of them; he retains Still a Poverty of Spirit; confesses himself unworthy; and makes it a Subject of greater Humiliation, to see so much real Unworthiness under so much State.

2. He sees an Injustice in commending himself, and therefore checks all such Inclinations; gives no incouragement

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agement to others to do it; and as often, as they speak to his commendation, he confesses it, within himself, not to be his due, and is troubled to hear so much real Unworthiness, to be so much valued.

3. He sees an Injustice in having Places of Honour or Preference given him; and therefore Seeks them not, and suppresses even the Desires of them; because he sees so much real unworthiness in himself, that Honor seems rather a Reproach, than his due. And if Respect be shew'd him, he then grieves, to see that esteem'd, which deserves to be despis'd by all.

4. Knowing himself to be miserable and worthy of contempt, he sees it Just, that others should have a Mean Opinion of him, that they should shew him no respect, and even despise him; and therefore as often as he is undervalued, affronted, reproach'd or despis'd by any; he judges them in the right, and is so far from being provok'd, that he thinks it as reasonable, as for useless things to be trampled under foot, or cast out of doors.

5. Knowing himself to be miserable and for his Sins, worthy of contempt, he

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sees it Just, that God should treat him, as he deserves, and therefore wonders not at any misfortunes, Afflictions, Sickneſs or other Trials, that befall him, but confeſſing all to be his due, he humbles himſelf, as an offender, under the hand of Juſtice.

6. Upon the ſame Principle, he endeavours even to rejoice under all kind of Contempt; becauſe he ſees this to be according to Juſtice, and that it is good for this Proud Clay to be humbled, and, by this way, kept in the true knowledge of it ſelf.

7. Upon the ſame Principle again, he is carefull to repell all kind of thoughts, in which he is inclin'd to give himſelf the Preference to others; and much more thoſe, which lay others under Contempt: becauſe having a ſenſe of his own manifold Unworthineſs, and not of others, he ſees no body Contemptible, but himſelf, and therefore always Judges the laſt place to be his due.

Laſtly, Whatever particular advantages he has, whether of Nature, Fortune or even of Divine Grace; and whatever eſteem he may have from others, on this account; yet is he always careful to ſuppreſs all thoughts

of Pride and Self-esteem; because he looks upon himself under his own Natural poverty; and seeing nothing here, but what is Contemptible, accordingly he retains the Judgment of himself: and as for whatever else is above this, he confesses it not his, but the Pure Mercy of God, and therefore, whatever Praise is due, it can belong to none but to God; and for him to take any part of it to himself, is Injustice and Rapine.

Q. If this be the Practice of Humility, where is this to be found? Do's not the whole world run contrary to all this?

A. This ought to be answer'd rather in Sighs, than Words. It ought to be a Confusion to us, to see, how much Pride prevails, and that the Practice of it is become so Universal, that it seems above reproach or Censure. But however, tho' it be very general, and its Authority very great, from what Custom has given it; yet still nothing of this evacuates the Gospel, and what here is declar'd Sinful and Detestable to God, cannot by the practice of a wicked world, be made Innocent. Such therefore, as desire at the last hour, to be found Christians
more

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more than in Name, ought to take their measures of all things from the Gospel, and be affraid of Pride, as of an Infernal Monster, tho' they see it carry'd, like a Favorite, in the breast of all they meet. This ought not to give them a better Opinion of it; so that, tho' the Christian world, like the rest, makes a Sacrifice of all they have to its Service, tho' it commands their Purses, furnishes their Tables, provides them Cloths, has the general influence on their Words and Carriage, and is principally consider'd in every Circumstance of life; yet the Sincere Followers of the Gospel, ought to have an abhorrence of it, as of a thing hateful to God, and most pernicious to man.

C H A P. XVIII.

Upon the same Subject of Pride.

Q. I See, you are for cutting off many things, which the World and Custom encourage, because you think them in favour of Pride?

A. I cannot but fear, Pride has too general an Influence upon most Persons, and that this is consulted, more than

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than the Will of God, which yet is the Rule, we pretend to follow. Now this I could wish reform'd. I could wish, all Christians would be true to their Profession; not considering, what is most agreeable to Nature, or what the World expects, or what is most likely to make them admir'd; but what is most Conformable to the Will of God, and to the Gospel, which Christ has left us for our Instruction. This is the method of a true Christian, and leads to the Perfection of the Gospel, and to its promises: But to take the other way, of Consulting Self-love, the World and Pride, is to follow Idols instead of God, and must be the way to Eternal death.

Q. If a Person should take this Self-denying way, may not he still be as Proud, under a mean Attire, as before?

A. Yes he may, and more; for if such an one should begin to entertain great Thoughts of himself, for what he has done, and despise others, who live in greater pomp, as blind Sinners, he has only chang'd his Pride from Carnal to Spiritual, and with the Pharisee may be cast off as a Reprobate by God, while, in his own Opinion,

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Opinion, he is Setting himself above his Neighbors, I own therefore, there may be a more dangerous Pride in those, who despise the world, than in those, who are Solicitous, in following all the ways of its Notorious Vanities.

Q. Is this an encouragement to reform?

A. It ought to be no discouragement, from endeavoring to amend, altho' it be certain, the Fall from a higher Place is the more dangerous. It is the same here in this, as in all other virtues: But notwithstanding the danger, there are still great encouragements for a Christian to renounce the common methods of Pride in the World.

First, in the Satisfaction of Conscience, that he do's not purposely feed that Pride, which is in him, nor employ his Thoughts, nor his Study, nor his Time, nor his money in its Service.

2. That if Thoughts of Vanity at any time disturb him, he may hope they are not Voluntary, since he contributes nothing to them.

3. That while he forsakes the ways of Pride, and labors to overcome it, he may with greater Confidence hope,

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that God will protect him, by his Grace, against this evil, which has made Captive the great part of the world.

4. That he gives no encouragement to this Vice by his ill example, but rather stands against it and declares it to be Folly.

These Comforts may the Christian have, who cuts off all, that he suspects to be the effect of Pride, in whatever belongs to him. So that he may with good grounds, be satisfied in the choice of his method, tho' others reproach him, of not being exempt from the evil, which he pretends to renounce, and that there may be as much Pride under rags as, under the most costly attire.

Q. How are Christians to resist this evil, when it perplexes their Thoughts, and puts in for a share in all they do?

A. They must, at the first appearance, put by all such thoughts, as they do others, that are Sinful, and protest against them.

The surest method, is, in the morning, to offer themselves and all they are to do, that day, to God; to protest, they desire and seek no other Glory, but his, and that if other thoughts occur

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cur in the day, they from their heart renounce them. In the beginning of every action, a like Oblation may be made of it to God, desiring his assistance, in rejecting whatever Suggestions of Pride shall present themselves: And then, if any appear, to cast them off quietly and without Solitude, is what may satisfy a good Conscience, since the Soul not concurring in them, neither by calling for them, nor purposely entertaining them, they are not to be esteem'd Wilful, and therefore, are to be reckon'd, the Temptations, but not the Sin of Pride.

Q. And if a Christian should come thus far, as to follow the ways of Humility, and reject the common Suggestions of Pride, is he then Secure from this Vice?

A. No; for if he thinks himself Humble, he may be Proud of this: such is the unhappy temper of this weed, it grows upon all Soils, and if not carefully watch'd, thrives by the very means of rooting it out.

Q. What then do you advise Christians to do in this case?

A. To follow the Apostle's, Advice, in working out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling. They are

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still to fear, when they have done all they can; because when they have turn'd their backs upon this vice, and quitted all its known ways; when they have run from it for many years, and taken shelter under the most rigorous Disciplin of Austerity and Retirement, it may still meet them again, and turn to its own advantage, all the Endeavors they use against it. This being their Case, what have they to do, but to be always Fearful of themselves, and to beseech God to stand by them, that by his Grace they may be protected from this evil, to which, thro' their natural weakness, they are so much expos'd?

Q. If this be the Case of those, who industriously fleeing this vice, take pains to overcome it; what must be the unhappiness of other Christians, whose life is under the conduct of Pride, and who have general Custom to warrant what they do?

A. These being more expos'd, must be in much more danger; and it is to be fear'd, that many of these, live under the continual guilt of this sin, tho' God has declar'd it, to be so hateful to him. Observe but the common

mon and receiv'd method of these; examin their Cloaths, their Furniture, their Attendants, their Table, their Visits, their Words, their Meen, their Actions, their Desires of Preferment, of Titles, of Place, the Disposing of their Children and whatever else belongs to human life, and there appears such an Evidence of seeking themselves and Human glory in what they do, and so little signs of their glorifying God, that it is to be suspected, they neither know themselves nor God, and that instead of seeking to do the Will of God, they are carried on by Pride, and think of little besides pleasing and magnifying themselves; And is not all this Contrary to the Gospel?

C H A P. XIX.

*Of Detraction or speaking
ill of our Neighbor.*

QU**I**S there reason for Christians to be Scrupulous in what they say of their Neighbor behind his back?

A. There is great reason to be careful in this point, because Detraction

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tion or Backbiting is number'd by
S. Paul among the Sins of those, who
are given over by God to a Reprobate
mind. Rom. 1. 30. enough to make Chri-
stians very Cautious; this being the
most terrible of all his Judgments.

Q. Why should this be so great a
Sin?

A. Because it is the breach of a
Fundamental Duty, even of that Cha-
rity and Love. which we owe our
Neighbor. It is a violation of that
Great Precept; *Thou shalt love thy
Neighbor, as thy Self.*

2. It is a Transgression of that Law
of Nature, which God has writ in
our hearts: *As ye would, that men
should do to you, do you also to them.*
Luk. 6. 31.

3. It is generally an Offence against
Justice, by relating more than is true.
Malice, Passion, Envy and Ill-will are
always Unjust in this kind; and there
being Scarce any Story of our Neigh-
bor, but these have a part in the Re-
lating it, it must be with evident dan-
ger of an Injustice, to report or credit
any thing of this kind.

4. And if there can be suppos'd no
Passion, yet still there must be gene-
rally

rally a great *Rashness*: because the Words and Actions of our Neighbor (as well as our own) depend upon Particular Circumstances, and upon the Intention, Purposes and Design of their hearts; and without the knowledge of these, it is *Rashness* to judge of them. Now, who can pretend to have a knowledge of these, which are seldom truly known to any, besides God himself? Let every Christian reflect, how often others have been Unjust to him, by reporting his Words and Actions, without a knowledge of his Intention, the Occasions, or other material Circumstances; and by this he will be convinc'd, how *Rash* it must be for him, to make any Reports to the prejudice of his Neighbor.

5. But if it be suppos'd, that a Person is fully convinc'd of the Truth and whole Truth of what he relates; yet, besides the Uncharitableness, there may be still a great *Rashness* and Injustice in it. Because, the Party concern'd, may, by an Humble and True Repentance, have made his peace with God, and be free from the guilt of past offences or Follies; and must it not then be Unjust for any to punish and make him suffer in his Reputation for such

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such Sins, which now are not; and to represent him under Infamy, when now he is in favour with God?

Q. If this be the nature of Detraction, ought not all to be very watchful against it?

A. So watchful, that I think none can pretend to the Truth of Piety, or to be Serious in the business of Salvation, that takes here a liberty, and is not heartily affraid of it. S. Bernard being of Opinion, that this Vice sends more to hell than any other.

Q. Is there any difference in the Sins of Detraction?

A. There is great difference, and many degrees of this sin, as First, to report any thing prejudicial to our Neighbor, for Discourse sake or unadvisedly, without thinking any harm.

2. To do it, in Compliance or flattery or to gain favour with one, who is pleas'd to hear such reflecting reports.

3. To do it, with some satisfaction, arising from dislike or Ill-will to the Party.

4. To do it, out of Malice or Revenge, and with a design of doing him an Injury.

5. To do it to such Persons, in whom the

the Party has an interest, and depends on their good opinion of him.

6. To do it, by Relating the Truth only, and such as is already known to many.

7. To do it, by discovering what was before Unknown, tho' True.

8. To do it, by adding some exaggerating Circumstances, and relating things as Certain, which were not Certain,

9. To do it, by accusing a Person falsely, following the Suggestions of Malice or Passion.

10. To do it, to one Person or in Public.

11. To do it, in some Inconsiderable thing, which may be some Lessening to the good Opinion of a Person.

12 To do it, in a case, wherein his Reputation is concern'd, and cannot fail of being prejudicial to him in some matter of moment.

13. To do it, against a Friend, a Person of good esteem, or of no Reputation; a Magistrate, an Ecclesiastic, a Parent. &c.

These, with other like circumstances, ought to be examin'd in all sins of Detraction or Backbiting, and by these may be discern'd the weight of

112 *Of Detraction or speaking*
of the Sin.

Q. If a Person means no harm, surely the Sin cannot be very great, in what he says?

A. It may be very great; because in things belonging to our Neighbor, we are oblig'd to consider beforehand, and be silent as to every thing, that is likely to injure him; since the Injury is the same to him, whether we intended it, or no.

Q. But if the thing be Truth; can there be a sin in speaking Truth?

A. Would you think it well, to have every thing made public, which might be said with Truth of you? The Case then is clear, that such Truths ought not to be publish'd, which are likely to be prejudicial to the Party concern'd; Charity or the Love of our Neighbor forbids it, and they, who do it, Offend against Charity.

Q. If the thing be already Public?

A. Then there is no Defamation, in relating it. But still there may be a fault, if a Person be pleas'd in his Neighbors Misfortunes, or Indiscretions, or takes delight in relating them. And, if there be no such Satisfaction;

tisfaction; yet it is what a Good Christian will be careful to avoid, because it is not according to Charity, which prescribes the Concealing our Neighbors Faults, and not the pointing at them and making them more Remarkable.

Q. If a Person speaks not of any such misfortunes, but it is always accompany'd with expressions of Compassion and Trouble for their Neighbor?

A. This is generally a Cheat; a pretext of Piety for taking liberty, without scruple. Were the Compassion True, it would choose to be Silent, rather than bring such a disagreeable Subject upon the board. None can pretend greater Tenderness, than for themselves; and when did you ever hear a Person, making his own Indiscretions or known Sins, the subject of publick discourse, upon the motive of Compassion to himself? This is never done of any Person present; and cannot be, but by disobliging the Party concern'd; and do's not this shew, that, notwithstanding the Pretended Compassion, it is not according to Charity.

Q. But may not a Christian speak of anothers Failing to a Superior, Friend or Director, who is capable
of

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of giving Advice and reforming them?

A. If this be done according to Charity and Prudence, it is to be commended and advis'd for our Neighbor's good; but even this being a thing subject to great Indiscretions, it ought not to be done unadvisedly, but with great deliberation. And when we have a Person, in whose Prudence we may confide, yet even here we are to suspect our selves and examin, whether the Information we give such an one and our Communication with him, be not to satisfy the Inclination we have, of speaking of our Neighbors faults, more than for the desire of doing him any good: because this Inclination is sometimes so Modest, as not willing to appear, but under the veil of Charity.

C H A P. XX.

Of Hearing Detraction or Backbiting.

Q. **I**F Detraction or Back-biting be so great a Sin, how can a Christian avoid having a part in it; since he can scarce come into any Company

pany, but this is one part of his Entertainment?

A. I wish I could question what you say. But tho' in Speculation I think it impossible, that the Followers of Christ should so familiarly converse with what is thus contrary to their Rule, so Unnatural, so Unjust, so Uncharitable; yet I must own the fact; and that the evil being so general, it is hard avoiding the guilt. But however something may be done.

Q. Tell me first, When the Guilt of this Sin falls upon him, that hears one speak to the prejudice of another?

A. When he is pleas'd or takes delight in hearing it: When he any ways encourages the discourse; either by Asking Questions, or Helping out the Discourse or Confirming it, or by pleasing smiles shews his approbation of it; for all this is joyning with him, that speaks, and consequently partaking of his guilt.

Q. If this be the case, what is to be done?

A. The Circumstances of Persons must be observ'd. When one is Chief in the Company, or we are amongst those, with whom we can be so Familiar, the Surest way must be to reprove.

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prove such Discourse, but still with Prudence, and in such a manner, as may give no offence.

2. Where this cannot be done, a Person may take the first opportunity and divert the Discourse, by starting some other.

3. Or he may undertake to be Advocate for the Absent, by Excusing or putting the best Constructions on what will bear it, or making things Doubtful, which cannot be excus'd; or by suggesting hopes of Amendment.

4. Where there cannot be this Freedom, a Person may sit in Silence, and being interiorly displeas'd at the Discourse, seem to give no Attention to it.

5. And where nothing else will do, he may take occasion to leave the Company.

Some such Means ought to be made use of, for not concurring in the Detraction and having no part in its guilt.

Q. Circumstances may render this very difficult.

A. They may do so; and yet Courage with some Contrivance may take off much of the difficulty. Few want
courage,

courage, even among their betters, to defend the Cause of their own Good Name; and find many Salvo's, to prevent any thing being fixt upon them to their prejudice. And why not some of this same Courage and Ingenuity in our Neighbor's behalf? The cause is good, and the Gospel justifies the undertaking it. But here is the misery, we are asham'd to do well, and aw'd by an ill-placed Modesty, we are not bold enough to appear in a good cause. And thus ill Custom gains upon the Gospel.

Q. You will however allow the difficulty to be great in those, who have dependance?

A. Here must be a great Temptation, as likewise, as often as we are in company of those, whom we are unwilling to disoblige. And this, in the first place, ought to be a Caution to those, who have any Degree of Quality, Authority or Superiority, not to speak evil of any, Since, besides the ill Example they give, they generally make as many Flatterers as Hearers, who, tho' contrary to their Conscience, will seem to assent to what is said, rather than venture to disoblige, by telling the Truth of what they

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they believe or know : And thus the guilt Spreads.

But then, Secondly, those, who have a dependance, and all others, ought to remember, that whoever flatters or complies with another, in any thing sinful, upon human considerations, is not to be call'd a Disciple; because a True Disciple forsakes all for Christ, chooses the Will of God before all things; and therefore such cannot have this Character, who have a greater regard to worldly interest, than to the Commands of Christ, and who will rather Joyn in what is evil, than lose the Favor of those, with whom they discourse.

Q. Then you would not have Christians be Civil?

A. There is as much Place for shewing Civility, in what I direct, as in any other case whatever; I would have all things be done with great Respect: there is no need of being Rude, to be a Christian. But certainly they extend Civility too far, who require a Compliance in what is Sinful. And if it be Rudeness to dissent, it is what the Gospel prescribes.

Q. But if some are easy in taking exceptions?

A. Deal

A. Deal with them in their own way, such as may give the least offence and be most beneficial to them; for so Prudence directs. They must be prepar'd with great Moderation, Meekness, Sweetness and Patience, who will do this well. The works of the Gospel are to be done by the ways and rules of the Gospel; to the want of this must be laid the miscarriage of Good Undertakings.

Q. But while thus you speak of Detraction; what advice can you give him, of whom many things are said to the lessening his Reputation?

A. The best way, in most cases, is to take no notice of what is said; but to sit down contented under the peace of a good Conscience. There is a Blessing promis'd in the Gospel, to those, who are revil'd or accus'd falsely: this Blessing ought to be a Motive for a Patient Submission: God being Witness, ought to be a Comfort to Innocence: and Christ being at the Head of those, who are publickly revil'd, ought to give satisfaction to such, as see themselves united to him in the resemblance of his suffering.

Q. Then you have no great opinion of such, as upon every word spoke to their

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their disfavour, are mov'd with Passion, and with great disturbance, expresse their resentments.

A. These do not practise the Gospel whatever they may know of it. Such opportunities are the very time of proving themselves Christians; and in these, to do quite contrary to what is prescrib'd, is to forget their Profession. Hear what *S. Peter* says; *If doing well you suffer patiently, this is acceptable before God; for unto this are you call'd; because Christ also Suffer'd for us, leaving you an Example, that you may follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was revil'd, revil'd not again; when he suffer'd, he threatn'd not.* 1 Pet. 2. 20.

Q. What is the import of this?

A. That if a Christian, doing well and living without offence, be reproach'd, revil'd or falsely accus'd by evil tongues, he ought to suffer it patiently, according to the Example of Christ; it being the very thing, to which we are call'd: and in so doing he will find favor with God; which those are not to expect, who upon such provocations, break forth into Passion and Bitterness.

Q. Is there any thing more you advise upon this subject? *A.* That

A. That a Christian, for his own peace, give no countenance to such busy Friends, as inform him, what others have said of him; but rather, that he absolutely forbid it, as an ill office, such as can have no other effect, but to give disquiet, and lay seeds of Misunderstanding between Friends. Whence those may see, what they have to mend, who practice this Informing Trade; for certainly the Guilt and Mischeifs of it are such, that a Christian would suffer less by having a Padlock on his lips, than by this abuse of them; which still has an Additional guilt, if some private interest, or Flattery, or Compliance be the occasion of his thus turning Informer.

Q. Is there no Exception in this?

A. Yes, When Charity and Prudence, foreseeing Mischeif design'd against a Neighbor, give notice of it, for its prevention.

Q. Well, but if a Person be injur'd in his reputation by ill tongues, would you not advise him, to do right to himself, by making known the Truth?

A. A man is no more bound to stand still, while his Good name is taken away, than his Goods; and

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therefore

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therefore it must be allow'd to do himself right; as far as he can by a peaceable and quiet remonstrance of the Truth; and having done this with discretion, he ought then to sit in peace under the Cover of a Good Conscience, and leave his Cause to God, to manifest the Truth in due time.

Q. But if a Person has drawn infamy upon himself?

A. He must then bear it with Patience, and receive all, that is said of him, as a Penance justly due to his Folly or Sins; and by a more than ordinary Exemplarity, endeavor to recover the Credit he has lost.

C H A P. XXI.

Of Lying.

Q. **W**Hat Opinion is a Christian to have of Lying?

A. A very ill one, such as the Word of God teaches him.

Q. What do's the Word of God say of Lying?

A. First, it declares, that *Lying lips are an Abomination to the Lord: But they,*

they, that deal truly are his delight Pro.
12. 22.

2. That God will destroy those,
that speak Lies. *Psa. 5. 6.*

3. That Christians ought not to
lie one to another. *Col. 3. 9.* But
that putting away Lying, every man
should speak Truth with his Neighbor.
Eph. 4. 25.

4. That a Righteous man hateth Ly-
ing. *Prov. 13. 5.*

In this manner ought a Christian
to think of Lying; That it is Hate-
ful in the sight of God; that it will
be severely punish'd by him; and
therefore that the Servants of God
ought to hate it and flee it.

Q. Are all Lies alike Sinful?

A. No, some are more provoking
than others; see the difference.

Some Lies are spoke with a design
to do wrong to others, as in accusing
an Innocent Neighbor, or in denying
a Debt known to be due, and are
call'd *Malicious Lies.*

Others are design'd in favor of
those, that speak them, or of others;
as in excuse of some fault, to prevent
reproof, and are call'd *Officious Lies.*

Others are only in Merriment, and
without any farther design, and are
call'd *Jesting Lies.*

Now in the First sort of Malicious lies, there is an evidence of Wickedness, which is not in the other Two; and consequently they must be greater Sins and more provoking, such as are an Abomination to the Lord. And such *Liars*, without a Sincere Repentance, *shall have their part, in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone.* Rev. 21. 8.

Q. And what of the other Two sorts, of *Officious* and *Festive* Lies; are these lawful?

A. No, you see they are set down, as Sins, and therefore cannot be Lawful.

Q. What think you then of such, as live in the general practice of them?

A. I cannot think well of them; for tho' the Best may be sometimes surpris'd; yet to live in the practice of what we know to be sinful, to take no care in reforming it, to go on with a certain Peace of Conscience, amidst such repeated transgressions, shews a very ill temper of mind, such as is in danger of forgetting God and falling away from him. And therefore I cannot but earnestly importune those; who are Subject to it,
to

to use all possible means for overcoming such an ill Custom, and to give no rest to their Souls, till they have effected it.

Q. Is there not difficulty in mastering such a Custom?

A. There is certainly in all Customs: But what then; is the difficulty of doing it, sufficient motive for not doing it? All the ways of Salvation are difficult to a Corrupt Nature; and yet whoever walks not in them, must be without Hope. Where Salvation is the Cause, nothing must discourage from pursuing it. They are Scarce in earnest, who make these Objections.

Q. What are they to do, who desire to overcome such an ill Custom of Lying?

A. They are to consider every day.

First, that the duty of a Christian is to do the Will of God.

2. That Lying is not according to the Will of God.

3. That to live in the practice of what is displeasing to God, shews a want of Love, a want of respect; it betrays a Neglect, a Heedlessness, an Indifferency.

4. That to go on in such a way cannot be safe; that since all depends upon the Free Grace of God, there must be great danger of being depriv'd of this help, where there is so little Solitude to please him, by doing his Will.

5. Therefore the Soul is bound to keep a strict Watch against this evil.

6. She must be resolute, in not letting Custom or Inclination take place of the Will of God.

7. And as often, as she falls short of her Resolutions, she must retire, as soon, as she can; prostrate herself, to the ground before God in the Humble Confession of her fault, beg pardon and increase of Grace; then take part with Justice and punish her Sin, by some more than ordinary task of Prayers, or of Reading, or of Confinement from Company, or Restraint from desir'd Divertisement, or of Alms, or of Visiting the Poor or Sick; by some such Humiliation, designing to make Nature fearful of offending, and more easy in Submitting.

Such Christians, as follow this method, with a Sincere desire of Amendment, and persevering in this Desire, with-

without letting any discouragements take place, will find God their Helper, and by this assisting and strength'ning Grace recover from their Ill Habits.

Lastly, they must examin every day, what is the Occasion of this ill Custom in them. Whether it be a Heedlessness, or a Vain Humor, or what else it be; and from thence endeavor to be asham'd of displeasing God, and hazarding Salvation upon such an account.

They may add the Consideration of their own Credit and Good Name; for Certainly, the Custom of Lying makes a man Contemptible; it shews a person to be Rash, Inconsiderate; to have a Light and Vain Head; to have no value or regard for Truth; one, that cannot be depended on for whatever he says; so that amidst all the advantages he may otherwise have, of Learning, Riches, Beauty, Wit, &c. it is not possible for a Wise or Good man to have any real esteem for him.

By such Considerations may a Christian overcome himself; and tho' not at once, yet by continu'd endeavors the victory may be expected; for Industry joyn'd with Perseverance overcomes all difficulties.

Q. But do you give no allowance to Excusive Lies, by which a person intends no more, than to defend himself?

A. There can be no excuse for these.

First because, it is, in some degree, going to the devil for help; and taking up his Arms, for making a Defence: because all Lies are from the devil.

2. Because it betrays a greater Fear of Man than of God; and is the Choice of rather displeasing God than Man. For all such Lies, are to the displeasure of God, and the Service of them is to keep off the Anger of men. Now there is such an unworthiness in this, that a Christian ought to blush at it, since it is, in some, kind, the setting the Creature above God. And what a Confusion ought this to be to such Christians, who upon the least apprehension of blame, presently take shelter in a Lie; whereas it is their duty, rather to suffer all reproofs, than to ward it by such unwarrantable Means? And is not this much aggravated; that the Reproof they apprehend, is what they generally draw upon themselves, thro' their Sloth, or Neglect, or Forgetfulness, or some more wilful fault; and

and whereas they know reproof to be their due, and that they ought in justice to bear it, in punishment of their fault; instead of this, to add fault to fault, and to defend themselves against Justice by a Lie, has something so Unjust and unbecoming the Christian, that he ought to have an abhorrence of the Practice, and choose rather to embrace the Reproof he deserves, than buy his peace at the price of offending God.

C H A P. XXII.

Of Lying Cursing and Swearing.

Q. **A** Custom of Lying being difficult to overcome, is it not best to stand against it in the beginning?

A. It is so in all other Cases; for Custom always creates difficulty: it grows insensibly, and is not to be overcome, but by violence. Hence it must be a very Christian Discretion in Parents, to be watchful over their Children in this point, and if they observe in them any Inclination to Lying, not to favor them upon any

account ; but to examin into the Truth of whatever they have reason to Suspect ; to encourage them in always speaking the Truth, and to reward them for such Truths, as they tell, in owning their faults, or that any other ways may seem to their prejudice ; with a certain Correction as often, as they are catch'd in a Lie. And this, not only while they are Children, but likewise as they grow up ; because there are some in their Youth very remarkably given to lying, either thro' a giddy, Heedless or vain Humor ; and if no care be us'd by friends for reforming it, they are in danger of living always under the discredit of it, and carrying the guilt of it to their graves.

Q. What do you think of using Equivocations ?

A. This is not to be encourag'd ; it being not agreeable to the Simplicity of the Gospel, which requires, that our *Communication* be, *Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay*, Mat. 5. 37. And if not commendable in ordinary Conversation, much less before Magistrates, when Justice is concern'd, and a Person upon Oath, is oblig'd to speak the Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

In

In such cases the plain Truth is to be declar'd, and nothing to be palliated, disguis'd or hid by Equivocation; because all such Contrivances are injurious to Truth.

Q. And are you so strict to the letter, in ordinary Conversation, as to require every one to answer the Plain and Direct Truth, when Curiosity or Malice may ask such Designing Questions, as cannot be thus answer'd without great Injury to matters of the highest concern as of Fortune, Life, Good Name, &c.

A. In some Cases, when a Person comes to be thus frightned between two Evils, and this is evidently the Least, ill Circumstances may Oblige him to choose it, rather than do worse: As when Curiosity, Impertinency or Malice ask such Questions, as cannot be directly answer'd, without prejudice to our Neighbor, or to some Trust we have undertaken: here certainly there must be some Allowance, and yet not so, as to be a Warrant, for the Common Practice of it.

Q. What think you of such Expressions, in Words or Writing, which are not literally true, and yet are not intended to deceive.

A. As

A. As general Practice or Custom has made them Current in any Sense, so they may be us'd, however literally they may be False. For where the Meaning is known, there can be no Deceit. It is the same, when a Person relates a Fable, as a Fable, or any other way relates what is not true, yet so, as in the manner of doing it, or by the Tone of his Voice, he discovers plainly his Meaning, and takes away all occasion of deceiving the Hearers. For in this he neither speaks against his own knowledge, nor imposes upon others; and therefore it cannot be censur'd for a Lie.

Q. What Opinion is a Christian to have of Cursing?

A. He is to judge it to be a great Wickedness and Scandalous Crime.

Q. Why so?

A. Because it is contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, which is the Spirit of Meekness, Humility and Patience.

2. It is Contrary to Charity, which obliges us to Love our Neighbors, whether Friends or Enemies, to help them, and to wish them all good. And what a Crime and Scandal then must it be, to wish Misfortunes and Damnation to those, for whose Salvation

Christ

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Christ shed his blood, and for whom we are bound to desire all happiness?

3. It is contrary to all, that the Scripture prescribes, of *Forgiving Injuries, Praying for Persecutors, Doing Good for evil* &c. Contrary to the Character of Christs Disciples, and to that Special Command, which Christ appropriates to himself, of *Loving one another.*

Upon which Considerations, Christians ought to have a Horror of Cursing, as of a thing not only unbecoming, but even Contrary to their Profession, and as a kind of Renouncing, all that they believe. For so it is, in fact, when a Person acts like an Unbeliever, and without any more regard to that Christ teaches, than if he were a Heathen. Cursing then is what ought not to be heard from a Christian's mouth, being nothing less, than taking part with the Devil, and espousing his interest, in desiring the destruction of man.

Q. And what do you say of Swearing.

A. I say, that those, who have a Custom of Swearing, live under the Guilt of a great Sin.

First,

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First, because it is an absolute transgression of God's Commandment, who has forbid his Name to be taken in vain, and in expresse terms declar'd the guilt of those, that do it.

2. Because it is expressly contrary to the Gospel, to the Doctrine and Will of Christ. *I say unto you Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, nor by Earth. Mat. 5. 34. Above all things, my Brethren, Swear not; neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Oath; but let your Yea, be Yea, and your Nay, Nay, lest ye fall into Condemnation. Jam. 5. 12.*

Whence it must be own'd, that those Christians, who have a Custom of Swearing, live in the daily Prophanation of God's Holy Name, in the violation of God's Commandments, and the Contempt of Christ and his Gospel. And what a Character is this of Persons, who believe in God and in the Gospel, and that there is no Salvation for those, who obey not the Commands of God, and walk not as Christ has taught?

Q. But if Christians have no such Malice in their hearts, but Curse or Swear out of a Custom only, without meaning any harm?

A. Then

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A. Then they have a Custom of Prophaning God's Holy Name, and Doing Contrary to his Commands; and how do's this excuse their Sin, who know they ought not to do so? If a Person should have a Custom of abusing Holy things, as the Temple, the Holy Vessels, the Holy Scripture &c. would the Custom of doing it, be a Moderation of the crime? Rather this is the Greatest Aggravation; that a Christian, who believes it his duty, always to obey God, not only offends him, but likewise lives on in the Custom of offending him, and makes it his continual practice to do so. For this involves in it the greatest of all Contempts, and shews the Soul to have no regard to God.

Q. But if Custom has made this look Great, and to be a kind of Ornament of Speech?

A. There can be nothing Great or Honorable, which is dishonorable to God. And nothing discovers a greater Baseness in a Soul, than not to have a Respect for God; for to despise him, is the lowest degree of all, that is Mean and unworthy, such as is not found in the devils, who Fear God and tremble,
but

but cannot despise him. And to make this an Ornament of Speech is again another Unworthiness, that equals the former : since nothing can be more unworthy of a Christian, than to raise himself by treading upon the Commandments, and to think that a Grace to his Discourse, which is the Prophanation of God's Holy Name. Robbing the Altar for the better furnishing a Play house or the Stage, would be a more tolerable Sacrilege.

Q. Then you are for giving no quarter to Christians, who have this Ill Custom?

A. There can be no Excuse for them. They must either mend, or believe themselves not Serious in their Profession of Christianity.

Q. But if they are troubled at their ill Custom, and break forth into such Expressions, without thinking or knowing what they say?

A. If they are heartily troubled for being subject to this ill Custom, because it is displeasing to God, and upon this motive Sincerely desire and labor to overcome it; then there may be some Excuse for what is the effect of an ill Habit only; for in this Case it being really contrary to their will,

it

it cannot be reputed a Wilful Sin. But then, how Watchful must they be, and what pains must they take, to give proof of their being in Earnest in the trouble, which they seem to have for their fault, and in their Desires of mending it!

C H A P. XXIII.

Of due endeavors for overcoming the ill Habit of Swearing or Cursing. And of taking God's Name in Vain.

Q. **I**T was thus resolv'd, that a Person subject to these Ill Customs, lies under a Criminal and Scandalous guilt, if he do's not use due endeavors for overcoming them: Now what if a Christian has endeavor'd and finds he can do nothing?

A. This is a Plea not to be allow'd in a Christian; it being nothing, but the Pretext of Sloth or Impatience, which are very hasty in Despairing, that a Cause being given over, there may be no more pains taken about it.

Q. What then must he do?

A. He

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A. He is in the broad way to Destruction, and do's he ask, what he must do? He must leave nothing untry'd, nor think of ever desisting from his Endeavors, till he recovers a better way. All is to be done for Eternity. See, what this may be.

First, let him observe, how easily he can command his Tongue, when those are present, whom he really respects or fears; or from whom it is his Interest to conceal this Failing. This will soon convince him, that the thing is very possible, and that his Desires might be effected, if he either Lov'd or Fear'd God, or had a sense of the dependance he has upon him.

2. Let him Remember, that his business is to learn to love and fear God: And that for accomplishing this, he must forsake his old ways, his Companions and Himself, and take such a Guide, as may shew him, how to begin a New life and put on the New man; it being not possible for any to come to the Love of God, if they still walk on in the ways of Death.

3. Let him conclude himself not to be in earnest, if he do's not thus. And if he do's thus, he will in a short time find the Motions, of his Soul
and

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and the Sentiments of his heart quite chang'd. The Knowledge of God will make him fearfull of offending: The Fear of Sin will make him Watchful against it. This Watchfulness will be attended with a Solitude for mastering his evil Habits; and where Sincerity and Industry are thus joyn'd, there can be no danger of a Disappoinment; because God cannot stand against such endeavors; but being prevail'd on by Prayers, by Fasting, by Alms, and by other effects of Justice in the punishment of all Failings, he will send forth his Succors, and be certainly found by those that seek him thus.

Q. Then I see, you doubt their Sincerity, who resolve to amend, but without any effect?

A. I do so. For they cannot be Sincere, who undertake a work, and leave it unfinish'd, because they will not take the pains necessary for carrying it on. And more reason still there is to charge it upon those, who having declar'd their Resolutions of Amendment, never more think, what they are to do, to amend. This is nothing but Pretext, Hypocrisy and Shuffling; and is the general method
of

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of these sort of Purposing Christians, who have some barren Designs of Amendment, but seldom ask the Question, what way they are to take for accomplishing their design? and if they do any thing, it is no more proportion'd to what they propose, than in time of a Seige, to set Children to raise works of clay against the enemy.

Q. But if Persons never Swear or Curse, but when provok'd, and put into a Passion?

A. Do you think here, one Fault excuses another? No, here is a double guilt, and both Faults ought to be mended. These ought to labor, in governing their Passion, who see such ill effects of it; and if they do not, they must answer for all the Sins, that attend it. If these would observe, how easily they are provok'd and how upon every trifling occasion, they break forth into these Scandalous Expressions; they must confess the guilt justly to belong to them, who seeing themselves going contrary to the Gospel, take so little care to amend.

Q. But if they intend nothing of what they say, and mean no harm?

A. Sup-

Of Swearing or Cursing &c. 141

A. Suppose it so; yet they give ill Example and Scandal; and the guilt of these Sins ought to oblige them to reform, if they had a concern for Salvation; since the Wo's pronounc'd against these, are such, as can allow no peace of Conscience to subsist with the guilt of them.

Q. May not God's Name be taken in vain, without Swearing?

A. Yes, it is taken in vain, as often as it is us'd unprofitably, without any reference to God or the good of our Neighbor.

Q. How is this to be understood?

A. That God's Name is Holy, and therefore, like all other Holy things, ought to be us'd in a Holy manner, to the Service and Honor of God; and as these are abus'd or prophan'd, if they are put to any other use; so likewise the Sacred Name of God.

Q. When is God's Name us'd with reference to him?

A. When it is us'd in Praying, Calling upon him, Humbling our selves before him; as likewise in all Teaching and giving Instructions.

Q. What then must I think of many Pious Christians, who upon all trivial

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occasions, have the Name of *God* or
Jesus in their mouths?

A. You may, without rashness, think,
that in this they know not what they do.
They have an ill Custom, and for want
of due reflection, are scarce sensible of
it.

Q. Then you are of Opinion, they
do ill?

A. I am so: for when I consider the
Infinit Holiness of God, how awful he
is in Majesty and Glory, how Adora-
ble in all that belongs to him; I ap-
prehend here something of that vene-
ration, which is due to him from all his
Creatures, I apprehend his Name to
be Holy, and that it ought not to be
nam'd by those, who believe in him,
but with Respect. Hence turning to
Common Conversation, and hearing,
how the Name of God is brought in
upon all Occasions, idly, unprofitably,
without any Reason, or Meaning or Sig-
nification, I cannot but be surpris'd to
see, What is acknowledg'd Holy, to be
brought into so much Contempt; so
as not to be set apart, as a Holy thing,
for Holy uses; but prostituted to
every thing, that is Senseless Ridicu-
lous or Prophane, which is to equal it
to the most inconsiderable and mean-
est

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est thing in the World. If then Christians of Good Principles joyn with others, who have lost all Respect to God, in thus lessening the Honor of God's Holy Name, the Fault is not to be excus'd upon their accounts, but they must bear the blame of their fault, and be answerable for it.

Q. But if they do not think of it?

A. This betrays their Fault, that they do not think of what they ought to think. It shews they do not either examin themselves, or not take care to mend, where it is wanting.

Q. They may not reflect of its being a Fault, to have Holy Names so frequent in their mouths.

A. This is their Fault still. For do's not the Commandments put them in mind of it, and shew them the Guilt? Do's not the Common sense of Religion, imprint in them a Horror of Abusing or Prophaning Holy things? If they should see Churches turn'd into Dancing Schools, or the Communion Table cover'd for a Game of Cards or a Dinner, here they would start, and wait for Judgments, to punish the Prophanation. And do not they know the Name of *God*, and of *Jesus* to be Holy; so Holy, that Respect is due to them

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them from the whole Creation; and
how then can they think it no Fault,
to mix these with all their sports, and
make them fill up every Idle Outcry
or Senseless Exclamation?

Q. How are they to mend this?

A. It is a shame for Pious Christians
to ask such a Question. They prophane
God's Name, and in so doing give ill
Example to some, who think it safe to
follow them, and Scandal to others,
who are offended at the Practice, and
then ask what they are to do to mend.
Nothing is to be left undone; let them
learn to have a true zeal for God's
Honor; be Solicitous not to offend, be
watchful, where they know their Fail-
ing is; and joyn Prayer to their En-
deavors; and if this will not do; it is
a sign they are not yet in earnest, and
therefore let them try by Fasting and
Sackcloth to correct that Heedless Hu-
mor, by which they say more than they
think of, and prejudice Piety for want
of better Government of their Tongues.

C H A P. XXIV.

*Of Rash Judgment, Suspicion,
or Jealousy.*

Q. **W**hen is a Person guilty of Rash Judgment?

A. When without sufficient Evidence, he judges to the prejudice of another.

Q. But if there be sufficient Evidence of a Person having done ill, is it then Rash or Sinful to judge so?

A. If the thing be evident, there can be no Rashness in it; neither can it be a Sin, within my self, to say it is so, when I see it so. If I see Judas take money to betray his Master, it is not Rash, to judge him a Traitor. The sin therefore is not in Judging, but in passing a Rash Judgment.

Q. Is there any danger of falling into this Sin?

A. Yes, very great.

Q. Whence is this danger?

A. Because we are naturally too Forward in Judging, and think we have sufficient Evidence, when in reality we have not. And hence the guilt of a great Injustice falls upon

us; that tho' we have almost daily experience of our Mistaken Judgments; yet still we are as hasty in Concluding, as if we had never been deceiv'd.

Q. Then I see you require great deliberation?

A. For a Sentence to be Just, the Cause ought to be well examin'd. To do otherwise is Rashness and Injustice.

Q. But if the thing be Clear?

A. Very few things are so: because, as to Good and Evil, all Actions and Words depend upon many Circumstances; and without the knowledge of these, we can never pretend any thing to be Clear to us: now many of these are so hidden and Secret (as depending upon the inward Motives and Intention of the Heart, and Information of the Understanding) that the certain Knowledge of them is very difficult and rare; and how then can we judge of them?

Q. As how?

A. A Person speaks in public what reflects upon you: you judge him Malicious, or your Enemy: when he spoke it by accident, or meaning something else, or not thinking of its concerning you. 2. A Person takes away in his Box what is not his own:

you

you judge him a Thief: when, it may be, he knew nothing of it, as being laid there by another hand: or put it up by mistake, as thinking it his own: or laid it only by; and afterwards forgot it.

3. A person goes into a house of an ill Reputation: You Judge him an ill man: when, it may be, he mistook the house, or went in to demand a Debt, or to take away his Child or Relation from such ill Company. 4. A Person is overseen in some Indiscretion or Folly, or Sin: You Judge of him by it: when, it may be, the very thing, for which you judge him, has given him such a dislike of himself, such a Sense of the Fault, that he is farther from danger of returning, than those, who never had the like misfortune. 5. A thing is missing in the house; you judge it must be one of those two, because there is no body else could take it: when, upon consideration, there are twenty several ways, by which the thing might be missing, without their knowing any thing of it.

Thus it is in infinit accidents, that occur daily. There is so great variety of Circumstances, and so great an Uncertainty attending most things,

that we can seldom do any more, than *Guess* at the Truth of them; and if we proceed to *Judge*, we do rashly; because we have not a full information, but rather so very lame and Imperfect, that there is no passing a Judgment, but with evident hazard of doing wrong. We see these mistakes in our Neighbors, in relation to what concerns us; how often they are deceiv'd in the whole matter; how often they put false Constructions both on our words and Actions; how they judge, without knowing the Principal Circumstances, on which the thing depends, and therefore pass very wrong Judgments of us. And if we had any Consideration or Justice in us, this ought to make us Fearful of Judging others, since we must be convinc'd, that we may be as easily mistaken, in what concerns others, as others are, in what concerns us.

Q. What then do you advise upon this Subject?

A. That Christians should act rationally and justly, and that is, generally suspend their Judgment.

Q. How is that?

A. It is, as all persons do in a Cause, which they do not fully understand:

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The Fear of pronouncing an Unjust Sentence, makes them forbear giving their Verdict, till things can be made clearer to them. And therefore they say; as long as things are thus in the dark and Uncertain, we dare not Proceed to Judge, and that is Suspending their Judgment.

Q. How far is it then, that a Christian may generally go in this matter without danger of being Unjust?

A. He can go no farther, than to say within himself; *Thus things seem to me: Thus they appear: There are these Reasons to think so: Thus I guess, from what at present appears &c. But I dare not Conclude or Judge it to be so; because things may be far otherwise, than they appear to me at present.* This is as far, as generally we can go, without danger of doing wrong.

Q. Then I hope, all the Thoughts that occur, prejudicial to our Neighbor, are not Sins of Rash Judgment?

A. No, There may many Fears arise, *Suspensions, Jealousys; Conjectures,* and many other busy and Working Thoughts, without *Fixing or Concluding* any thing; and tho' there may be sometimes a Fault in such Thoughts,

in giving greater liberty, than what the present occasion will justify; yet they are not Rash Judgments, as long as the Judgment is kept in suspence, because of Uncertainty appearing, and the danger of being mistaken.

Q. Do you excuse then all Suspensions and Jealousys?

A. I Commend them, when they are Reasonable: they are then the effect of Care and Duty, and prevent many Mischiefs. But I disapprove such as are Unreasonable; for these do as much mischief, as the others do good.

Q. When are they Unreasonable?

A. When Suspensions are rais'd from *Common, Ordinary* Occasions, such as have no particular Connection with what is suspected; and especially of Persons, whose tried Fidelity and Virtue, sets them above all, that can be reasonably suggested from such occasions. In these Cases, Suspicion and Jealousy are not Reasonable, but being the effect of Melancholy, Excessive Fear or Humour, must be condemn'd, as all other Passions are.

Q. Do you reckon this a Sinful Passion?

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A. I reckon it, in it self, to be a great Weakness of mind, and rather Indiscretion, than Sin. And yet it is the Occasion of many sins, in destroying the Inward Peace of those, that are subject to it, making them unfit for all Duties, and bringing Contentions amongst others, so that there can be no long Comfort under the Roof, where this Evil reigns.

Q. What can you advise those who are Subject to it?

A. To be Watchful in putting away all such Thoughts, as if they were the Foulest of all Temptations. To stand with Resolution against them, even when they seem to carry Evidence with them. To be asham'd of such a Poor Spirit, as to be disturb'd with such inconsiderable Accidents. To aim at something more Generous, than to be perplexed and give disquiets, upon Trifles. To Blush at the Impatience so easily mov'd. To be confounded at such excessive Concern for Creatures, and so little Concern for what is Eternal. The ground of this must be something very Immoderate, and therefore ought with tears to be lamented, and with daily labor to be oppos'd. Where Reason is not

wholly overwhelm'd, it may gain something by persevering endeavors; but where the evil is rooted in Temper and strengthen'd by a long Indulgence, good endeavors must be commended, and may be blessed with a good effect; but the daily endeavor must be, to have Patience under their own Weakness, which they know to be Unreasonable, and yet know not how to overcome.

Q. Have you nothing more to recommend to them?

A. That all, who are subject to be Positive in Judging, to be too Forward in Suspecting would but punctually set down for one Month, how often they are mistaken; and I cannot but think, they would have reason for the future, rather to suspect themselves, their own Judgments and Suspicions, than any thing besides, and hence begin to think them not fit to be regarded, but rather to be put by with contempt, as Imperinent Trifles, or Great Cheats.

C H A P. XXV.

Of Temptations.

Q. **W**Hat do you mean by Temptations?

A. I mean a kind of *Tryals*, by which a Christian is exercis'd in this life.

Q. Are they all evil?

A. No: Some are from God; others are from the Devil.

Q. What is the Difference.

A. God sends Trials for the proof of our Fidelity; that being found Faithful, he may crown us. Thus he try'd *Abraham*, *Job*, and as many Martyrs &c. as have suffer'd with Patience. The Devil contrives Temptations, that he may ensnare and overthrow us, as he did *Eve*, *Sampson*, *David*, *Solomon*. &c.

Q. Are the Temptations of the Devil always Sins?

A. They are always the effects of the Devils Malice, but they are never our Sins, except we make them so, by our own will.

Q. How do we make them our Sins?

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A. Principally by *Approving* them, being *Pleas'd* with them, or giving our *Consent* to them.

Q. As how for example?

A. If Thoughts of Anger or Revenge come into my mind, and I, upon observing them, am either *pleas'd* with the thoughts of being reveng'd or *approve* and willingly *entertain* them, or give my consent to them, and *resolve* to put them in execution: then I make all such Thoughts my own, by the Act of my own Will, and must answer for the Guilt of Wilful Sin.

Q. But if you do not approve or entertain such thoughts in your mind?

A. If I do not Approve or Entertain such Thoughts in my mind, but, upon the first observing them, earnestly endeavour to put them away from me; then they are not my Sins; my Will having no other part in them, but in Fighting against them.

Q. In this then there can be no offence?

A. So far from Offence, that it is performing an acceptable Service; such as it would be in a Servant, driving away from his Master's door, a person whom he perceiv'd to have an

ill' design upon the house. For as in so doing he shews himself Faithful in his Master's business; so a Christian, by resisting sinful Thoughts, and endeavoring to put them away, gives proof of his Fidelity, and shews himself Firm in maintaining the Cause of Virtue against its Enemies.

Q. But if such sinful thoughts, thus put away, return again, and again?

A. If they should return every hour in the day, and so often be resisted; if they should continue, making their assaults upon a Christian whole hours, days, or weeks, and he continue still upon his defence, and making resistance, he cannot be charg'd with the guilt of them; but must be commended for his Fidelity and Constancy, in not yielding to a troublesome enemy, but amidst all the Solicitations still abiding True to the Interest and Cause of his Lord.

Q. Must it not be a great trouble to a pious Soul, to be thus perplex'd?

A. It ought not to be so; because this can be no prejudice to him, as long as he continues Faithful; rather he ought to rejoice in the exercise of his Duty, in doing what is acceptable to God, and giving proofs of his Resolutions,

tions, in the Cause of Virtue. Is a Soldier or Good Subject troubled, at the frequent opportunities he has of shewing his Loyalty to his Prince; on whose favor and good Opinion he depends for his Preferment? If then a Christian be disquieted on the like occasions, it is to be fear'd, this proceeds from Self-love or Impatience.

Q. How so?

A. Because in Spiritual affairs, as well as in Temporal, there is a Natural Desire of going on peaceably, quietly and without disturbance; and when it cannot do so, it is troubled at what is thus contrary to Inclination. Now this Trouble is the effect of Self-love and of a want of Patience.

Q. What motives can you give for a Christian having Patience, amidst the trouble of Temptations?

A. First, because this life is not a State of Peace, but of Trials and War; and it must be a duty, to submit to the Conditions of it: and to be Impatient at it, must be great Indiscretion.

2. Because such is the Order of Providence, that man, being not wholly deliver'd from the empire of the devil, should experience this Subjection in punishment of his Sin; and not to sub-

submit to the trouble of this punishment, is Impatience.

3. Because by Temptations a Christian has the greater sense of his own Weakness, and from hence may lay the foundation of a lasting Humility, and stand against all the dangers of Pride.

4. Because by Temptations being Sensible of the continual dangers in which he is, and seeing, that he has no help in himself; he is convinc'd of his entire dependance on God, and of the Necessity of seeking help from him.

5. Because by resisting Temptations, he may improve in virtue: it being the method of Common discretion, to keep a stricter Guard; and fortify with greater strength, where they observe the greater danger.

Upon these and such like motives, the Christian, while he has an abhorrence of Sin, may find it reasonable and even a duty to submit to the trouble of Temptations, and instead of being dejected, have patience under this trouble with hopes of receiving benefit by it.

Q. But if the Temptations are such as carry Horror and Abomination with

with them, can you then wonder, if a Soul be troubled?

A. I do not wonder at it; and yet it ought not to be so: for the most Abominable of all Temptations are no more Sins than any others, if the Soul gives them no admittance, but rather has an abhorrence of them. What more horrid Temptations, than those, with which the Devil assaulted Christ in the Desert, of Falling down and Worshipping the Devil, and yet this was no way, injurious to the Infinite Sanctity of our Redeemer? This ought to be a Comfort to all Christians, when the Devil, in this frightful manner, shews, his Malice against them.

Q. The Trouble must arise from the great apprehension and Fear they have of yeilding to such Thoughts; and how shall they know, they do not consent or yield to them?

A. Christians of compos'd minds easily discern this, in the opposition made against them, and in the Dislike of them. But it is not so easy, for others, who are of a frightful temper, because the disturbance of their minds causes Confusion and darkness. But however they may from these

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observations make a Judgment of what passes within them.

First, if they were affrighted at any evil propos'd, it is a good argument of their not yielding to it or approving it: because Fear and Disturbance is a sign of Dislike and not of Approbation.

2. If upon any evil propos'd, they find a Trouble seising on them; and that, upon recovering their Thoughts, they have a weight upon their Spirits: this Trouble and Oppression are good signs of not having approv'd the evil; because Trouble, is an argument of Dislike and not of Approbation.

Q. If then they perceive this Fear and Trouble, they are to judge, that they yielded not to the evil propos'd: but, what if they still fear the Contrary?

A. Such Fears are not to be regarded: nothing is more deceitful than Immoderate Fears; these corrupt the Judgment, blind the Understanding, confound the Reason, perplex the mind; and to Judge by these, is as absurd, as to choose a Mist for discerning more clearly distant Objects. Such Fears then ought to be depos'd;
and

and the Judgment is to be fram'd from such Hints, Marks or observations, as are a more certain indication of the Truth: and on these it may depend with Confidence, and with peace of Conscience, even while Fears are endeavoring to put it on the Rack.

C H A P. XXVI.

Upon the same Subject of Temptations.

Q. **Y**OU have discourag'd Fearful Christians from having regard to their Fears: But, what if they are fully convinc'd, of Wilfully yielding to Sinful Thoughts?

A. Their Fears may deceive them in this. For tell me in another Case; if you should see a Person, upon seeing his house on fire, surpris'd with suddain Fear; fall down in despair and cry out, I am burnt, I am burnt, when the fire is yet at a distance: would not you Judge such Fear too hasty in despairing, and that it concludes all gone, when there is no harm done? It is many times so in
Chri-

Christians disquieted with Excessive Fears; their Apprehension of Sin is so great, and the working of their Imagination so strong, that they conclude the very Sight of Sin, to be their Consent to it; when at the same time, they have a dread upon their Souls, which shews the Evil propos'd not to be their Choice, but their Aversion. Hence concluding too hastily by their Fears, they think they have sin'd, when they have not, and are under the rack of Conscience, without the Guilt of Sin.

Q. Do you Judge thus of all Christians?

A. No; but only of such, as are immoderately Fearful and Scrupulous, and whose known Piety shews them to be Persons, whose great Care and Solitude is to avoid Sin. These are under a distemper of Mind; their Fear is Excessive, and even raises many of those Imaginations, which are their Rack; as it is in all Fearful Persons, who fancy many Frightful things before them, which others see not, or know to be nothing; and till they can moderate their Fears, are not likely to have relief: hence Compassion is due to them; and this Favorable

able Construction is not Favor, but in justice due to their Case.

Q. What then would you have these do?

A. Be Punctual in following Direction, Fearful and Scrupulous in departing from it; this Fear would be better placed, and help to cure the other. I would have them learn to despise Shadows, and not be afraid of them; for the worst of Temptations are no more to Souls, that have an Aversion to them; if they could come once to laugh at the Devil's Malice, and pass by all his Suggestions with as little concern, as if they did not see them, they would soon find the Comfort of it in an interior Peace, and in a great Freedom of Spirit, not Subject to the disquiets of vain terrors and a weak Imagination.

Q. But as to other Christians?

A. Others are to examin the whole Proceeding and several Steps of their Thoughts; upon the Suggestion of any Evil:

First, Whether they made Reflection upon it, as soon as they could, and endeavor'd to remove it.

Or whether, upon an imperfect Reflection, there was some Neglect, in not presently awakening the Soul, and mak-

making a speedy opposition against it.

Or, whether, upon an imperfect Reflection, the Soul linger'd under the Seizure of some Delight, as seemingly unresolv'd whether it should rise up and make resistance against the evil, or embrace the Satisfaction of it.

2. Whether, upon a perfect Reflection upon the evil propos'd they presently and earnestly endeavor'd to defend themselves against it; or, instead of this, linger'd under the thought, without using such endeavors.

3. Whether they willingly open'd their heart to the Evil, gave it admittance, entertain'd it and took Satisfaction in it.

4. Whether they had a Deliberate Desire of accomplishing the evil propos'd.

5. Whether they positively resolv'd upon accomplishing it.

6. How long time they continu'd willingly entertaining such evil Thoughts, Desires or Resolutions.

By these Particulars other Christians are generally to examin themselves, and accordingly, as they discover their Fault, so to be careful in repenting of it.

Q. And can there be a Sin then in Evil Thoughts, before a Christian perfectly reflects upon them? A. If

A. If a Christian observes, that Sinful Thoughts possess his mind, and that he is busy in them, for some time before he fully reflects upon them, he cannot but conclude himself under some Indisposition; since if his Soul were truly possess'd with a Sense of its duty, and a just Fear of Offending, it would be certainly more Watchful, so as even to start at the first appearance of the evil. Thus the first sight of what we truly dread, seises us with Fear: and therefore, if we can converse for some time with what is sinful; if we have various Thoughts and Discourses, within our selves, upon it, and are so far from being affrighted, that we seem to take no notice of it, there is just ground to fear, that we have not that true Fear of Sin, as we ought to have, but are rather Indifferent, than Averse to it. And it may be, that what we generally call, *not reflecting*, may be a Sinful Neglect, the effect of a sinful Tepidity and Want of Care in not putting our Souls in better Order.

Q. May Evil Thoughts be any other ways our Fault, if we do not willingly entertain them?

A. Yes, if we have given any Wilful or Sinful Occasion to them; for thus,

thus the Danger is of our own Creating, and we must be charg'd with it. And therefore, if Christians by Idle Conversation, Discourfing or Reading, have their minds afterwards busied in Idle Amusements, it is not to be question'd, but they must own these to be their Sin, altho' they then give no wilful admittance to them. We are not to be answerable for Temptations, that are not of our own seeking; but it is otherwise, if we, without necessity, put our selves into Temptation.

Q. What ways are there for a Christian, to put away evil Thoughts?

A. There are many: as First to turn immediatly his Thoughts to God, in Prayer, earnestly petitioning to be deliver'd or protected against all evil.

2. To run, in Spirit, to Christ Crucify'd, and take shelter in his Sacred Wounds, with an entire Confidence in him.

3. To prostrate to the ground, in an humble distrust of himself and claiming the Promises of God, made to those, who call upon him in their distress.

4. To make protestation against the evil suggested, whatever it be, and call God to witness the Sincerity of what he do's.

5. To

5. To take a good Book and read, and above all the Word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit, to which the Apostle advises, as most powerful for overcoming the enemy.

6. To resist the Devil with Courage ; so *S. James* prescribes ; resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.

7. To apply his Thoughts to business, to discourse of indifferent matters.

8. To take no notice of them, but pass them by, as if not seen ; and this with a quiet and undisturb'd mind : as knowing, that their presenting themselves before him is no sin, as long as he regards them not.

Some Servants of God have with these, practis'd other rigorous Expedients, endeavoring to repel Force by Force : but however these here set down are the more General Helps, and Christians making use of them with a Sincere and Humble heart, will find benefit in them. The Last being most proper against such Thoughts, as have any Foulness or Horror in them.

Q. Is there any other Remedy you can prescribe?

A. The most Certain is that of a Holy life, employ'd in seeking and serving God, in declining the Occasions
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of Sin, in withdrawing from the Common dangers of the World, in avoiding Idleness, and Unprofitable Conversation, in daily endeavoring to improve in Virtue, and doing good to all, accompany'd with the exercises of many Self-denials, proper for bringing the Will into Subjection, and overcoming Nature and the World. Such a life is the best Security; for tho' it be not exempt from Temptations; yet God is Faithful, and will not Suffer such Christians to be tempted above their strength; but all will turn to their greater good. Now, as this is the best Remedy, so a Common Worldly life is that, which leads into all Temptations; daily seeking them, delighting in them, studying to encrease them, and Scarce making any Expence, but what is Favorable to these. Such Christians cannot without confusion put up this Petition to God, *And lead us not into Temptation*; their whole life being a Course of Voluntary and Study'd Temptations; and how then can they be Free from Sin, since they go into it, and in a manner renounce that Help, which alone can be their Protection?

C H A P. XXVII.

Of a Worldly Spirit.

Q. **W**Hat do you mean by a Worldly Spirit?

A. I mean here a Spirit bent, with an immoderate Solitude, upon the concerns of this world, not as to any thing directly Sinful, nor yet as press'd to it by Necessity.

Q. What is the evil of such a Spirit?

A. The evil of it is, that where there is such a Solitude, there is

1. A want of Faith in the Providence of God.

2. A want of Confidence in the Goodness of God.

3. A want of Submission to his Orders and Appointments. Then as to the evil effects of it, these are without end or measure. 1. By it the Soul is kept under a continual Disquiet.

2. It has no Sense of Gratitude for whatever Blessings it receives, thro' the Solitude of what it seems to want.

3. It is not capable of performing any one Spiritual duty, as it ought to be, being distracted with unreasonable disquiets.

4. It

4. It is so streightn'd, that it dares not perform the half part of those Charities, of which it is capable.

5. It is so taken up with it self, that it has little Compassion for others, and often gives Scandal thro' hardness of heart.

6. It has so great a Concern for this life, that the other is generally neglected, and almost left to chance.

7. It is so eager for present advantages, that it is often in very great danger of doing Injustice for interest Sake, tho' still disguis'd with some plausible Cover : and many times falls under the guilt of Oppression ; and doing what is very Mean and Unreasonable.

These are some of the ill effects of Immoderate Solitude, such, as ought to make Christians affraid of it, and resolute in the endeavors of mastering whatever degree of it, they can discover in themselves.

Q. You do not in this I hope, discourage Christians from being Careful in their worldly Duties?

A. No, by no means ; To be Careful, Punctual, Diligent, and Faithful in the Obligations of every State, is so far from being a Fault, that it is the
I Duty

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Duty of every Christian, whatever his Condition be ; and to be wanting in them, is not only a Failing, but may easily come to be Sinful, and even very sinful, in the Consequences of such a Neglect.

Q. Then you approve Diligence and Industry, but discommend Solitude ?

A. I do so ; and this I have learnt from the Gospel, which recommending Fidelity and Care to Christians, forbids them to be Sollicitous ; *Nolite Solliciti esse : be not Sollicitous.* Mat. 6. 25. and this is press'd by Christ to his Followers, in that chapter, by so many Arguments, that, it may be, there is not one point of the Gospel enforced with more.

Q. What is the Difference between Christian Care and Solitude.

A. The Difference, many times, appears not outwardly, because both alike oblige men to Industry and labor ; but still there is great Difference in the Spirit interiorly moving.

1. Solitude places its Confidence too much, if not all, in human Industry : but Christian Care trusts in the Blessing, God gives to its endeavors.

2. Solitude is for going on and thriving at any rate, without due regard to

to Justice and Right: but Christian Care, desires no other Success, but as agreeable to the Will and Law of God.

3. Solitude is taken up with Temporal Concerns: but Christian Care reserves time, for duly Satisfying its Obligations to God.

4. Solitude thinks all lost, when human means fail, and absolutely despairs: But Christian Care still retains a hope in God, because tho' such Means fail, yet God do's not: and therefore, when Solitude is in Despair, this enjoys a certain peace in God, whose Power and Goodness are still the same, whatever be the miscarriage of its own labors.

Q. The Difference is plain: but describe to me now, in what disposition of mind, a Christian should undertake and manage whatever Concerns he has of this life?

A. A Christian, in whatever State he be, has obligations and Business belonging to his State, whether bond or Free. Now as to all these;

First, The Christian ought to undertake them, in Obedience to the Will of God; because being in this

State, it is the Will of God ; he should satisfy the Duties of it.

2. He ought to be Careful and Faithful in what he do's, because he is performing the Service or Duties, which the Order of Providence has laid upon him, and Fidelity is due to such Orders.

3. He is not to confide in his own labors or Industry, but in the Power, Goodness and Blessing of God : because, whatever Natural Means are us'd, the effect is not to be attributed to them, but to God, and he is as much to be acknowledg'd the Author, as if it had been wrought by Miracle, without the concurrence of any thing created. For all is from God.

4. Hence he is to perform all with a peaceable dependance on God, Confessing him to know what is best, and therefore, with interior Quiet, waiting for the manifestation of his Will in whatever shall happen.

5. If Success follows his endeavors, he is to acknowledge it from God, and beg Grace, that he may make a good use of his Blessing. But if he be disappointed if he meets with difficulties or Troubles, if he sees nothing, but misfortune before him, and a total miscarriage,

riage, as to whatever he propos'd; yet still is he to have Comfort and Hope; he is to have Comfort, in having done his Duty, in having omitted nothing on his part, in being in the hands of God, who knows and orders what is best; and in his Infinit Goodness is he to rest with Hope, who has infinit ways of Helping, even while all seems in despair.

In this manner the good Christian undertakes his Duty piously, performs it Faithfully, depends on God entirely, waits for the determination of his Will peaceable, and rests in it with Comfort, whatever it be.

Q. But if a Person's Temper be such, that he knows not how to banish this Solitude from his Breast?

A. He must labor the more earnestly against it. I would have him every day look at his Distemper:

First, see, how Unreasonable it is; since whatever his Solitude be, he cannot effect any thing by it, any more than he can add to his Stature, by being thoughtful upon it. Solitude disquiets, makes Uneasiness, disables the mind, consumes the Spirits, renders a person incapable of performing, what otherwise he might have done, and provoking God's dis-

pleasure shuts out his Blessing from us: and can, it be allowable in a Christian to tolerate in himself such an evil!

2. Let him see how unchristian it is, to have so great a concern for things, that must perish: to be so much troubl'd, about what is in it self so very Inconsiderable: to lose all comfort and peace, upon such Trifles. What becomes of Eternity, while the Soul is thus consuming it self upon what ought to be despis'd! This is certainly not a Christian Temper, and therefore ought not to be tolerated: So much concern for ordinary things of this life, and so little for the next! How can this consist with Faith!

3. Let him see, that if things not going right be his trouble, there is nothing more out of order than himself, and that to amend this ought to be his first care. For what will it avail him, if all things were right, and he himself not so!

Such Considerations daily and Seriously meditated might be some help in moderating Solitude; and if they are not presently effectual, yet ought the Christian to persevere in his good en-

endeavors. The Evil, of it self, is dangerous, and of very ill Consequence; and being rooted in Constitution or confirm'd by Custom, is not easily overcome; he must not therefore either be dejected or tir'd, when the Case is such, that not to overcome, is to put Eternity to the hazard.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Of a Worldly Spirit.

Q. **W**HAT do you mean here by a Worldly Spirit?

A. I mean here such a Spirit, as finds no Satisfaction, but in the Common ways of the world, is pleas'd with all that is Light and Vain, Pursues Divertisments, loves Idle or Unprofitable Conversation, is Fond of Gaming, observes no Disciplin, indulges Appetite and Sleep, is not apprehensive of danger, is prodigal in its Expences, delights to be in Public, courts Applause, keeps up a Form of Religion, but Practises none.

Q. And what Judgment do you make now of such Christians?

L. 4.

A. I.

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A. I think, they are in a very dangerous way; and that if they are not already under the guilt of great Sins, they are at least hast'ning to this misfortune.

Q. How so?

A. Because they live in the midst of Dangers and Temptations; they are pleas'd and delighted in them, and even seek them. Now those, who know, how great is the Weakness of Nature, know likewise, it cannot long subsist amidst such circumstances, especially where there is so very little reason to expect the Grace of God for their Security.

Q. Such Christians may have an Abhorrence of all crimes; and may not they, upon this, hope for God's Grace, to support them?

A. They may have a kind of abhorrence; but how can this be sincere, when they converse so Familiarly, and take such delight in the Occasions of Sin? Such an Abhorrence is not to be trusted; and if well examin'd, it is to be fear'd, a manifold guilt might be found consisting with it, while there is a horror of the Scandalous part. The Soul may lie under the guilt of very great Sins before

before God, even while it appears Innocent to the eyes of men.

Q. Then you cannot depend upon the good opinion, which they have of themselves?

A. I cannot; they are too Partial to be trusted. They love themselves and the World so well, and have so great an Interest in it, that they judge more by Inclination, than Equity. Their Judgments are corrupted by the pernicious Maxims of those, with whom they converse, who frame Principles in defence of their Liberties, and by their Ralleries bring the ways of the Gospel into Disesteem. They study nothing of the Gospel, nor take any pains to enquire, what are the Rules of a Christian life; and how then are they qualify'd, for making a true judgment, Whether they live up to them, or transgress them? Can those be fit to judge of Trespases, who know not the Law?

Q. If they know not themselves, and see not their own faults, pray, do you tell me, wherein they are wanting in their duty?

A. I think they are under a manifold guilt:

First, In loving the World so much, when the Gospel declares to them, that *Whoever will be a Friend of the world, is the enemy of God*; Jam. 4. 4. If the Gospel be the Law to Christians, they live in Sin, who follow it not.

2. In being very Unjust; whilst having the concern of a Temporal and Eternal Life before them, they are so much more solicitous for what must soon Perish, than for what is of an everlasting durance. And make it their Study, how to please themselves for a moment, while the business of being Eternally happy, scarce enters into their thoughts.

3. In breaking the Greatest of all the Commandments, in not Loving God above all things, and with all their hearts. It being certain, that the love of God is not in their hearts, who make it their daily and whole business to please themselves and not God, to do their own Wills, and not the Will of God.

4. In breaking another Command of Christ, in which he thus enjoyns; *Seek first the kingdom of God*. Now to seek the kingdom of God first, being to seek it in the first place, above all things

things and before all things, with the greatest Care and Concern, with the most serious and persevering endeavors, with the greatest labor and Courage, so as rather to choose to lose all things, than heaven: how do these observe this Command, who bend their whole thoughts to this world, have their Care, Concern and Solitude confin'd to it, and scarce think more of the other, than of a thing, not worth their Care, and may therefore take its chance.

5. In abusing and perverting all the Blessings of God, by living an Idle and Unprofitable life. Justice requires, that whatever comes from the hand of God, should be employ'd according to his Will, to his service and Honor. And Christ has manifested his Will, that all are to give an account of their Stewardship, and of whatever Talents they have receiv'd. Now how can they do this, who instead of employing, what they have, to God's Honor, make a daily Sacrifice of it to Self-love and the World, to their Senses and Appetite, to Ambition and Pleasure; and do as much serve and worship these as ever any Heathen did his Idols? Can these say, they

they render to God the things, that are God's? Can these pretend to serve God with what they have? Can these say, they lay up Treasures in heaven, or bring forth fruit to life everlasting? Let them speak Truth, and they must confess, that they are barren Trees, and being found without Fruit, can expect no other fate, but to be cut down and cast into the fire.

6. In Neglecting the ways of Salvation, and taking no care to follow the Rules of the Gospel. Not endeavoring to be Humble and Meek, and Poor, of Spirit; nor to overcome the World and Crucifie the Flesh, nor to live according to the Spirit &c. Now these being Rules given by Christ to his Followers, as many as believe in his Name, are bound to observe them, because this is their Profession; and to make this no part of their care, is to be False to what they Profess; it is, in fact, to renounce their Faith, and to declare, that either they do not believe Christ, who prescribes these Rules, or that they have no concern for that Heaven, which he promises to the Observers of them.

In these and many other Particulars, Christians of this Worldly Spirit seem daily to offend; so that while they seem Innocent to themselves, I cannot but lament their unhappy State and think them to be out of the way of the Gospel and of all its Promises.

Q. What then would you advise them to do?

A. To change the whole method of their lives. This may be a hard saying; but what less can they do, who are altogether out of the way? observe the Particulars:

First, let them think of a Proper Person, by whose Skilful Charity they may be directed, and on whose Prudence they may confide. And if they will be resolute, in following the advice of such an one, they will soon find a good effect of their endeavors.

2. Let them break off from their usual Company, and choose better.

3. Let them endeavor to be something regular in observing hours and Disciplin.

4. Let them daily, at appointed times, read and study such Books, as may inform them of the truth of this world and the next; and teach them

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to esteem every thing, according to its real worth.

5. Let them be constant in Prayer, and every day spend half an hour by themselves, Walking or otherwise, to consider upon their past ill management, that nothing is worth their Care, but heaven, and what they are to do, to gain it.

6. Let them frequently confer with their Director, and be sincere in their Communications with him. Let them call themselves to an account of their life past, and having, by a true Conversion and hearty Repentance, made their peace with God, let them begin a new life, neither discourag'd with rising difficulties, nor regarding what the World says.

By such endeavors, there may be great hopes of amendment, and without them, I cannot but fear all to be lost. But then those that undertake it, must remember, not to be easily tir'd, because the work they have to do, is great, being the change of the whole man, and great works are not to be perform'd, but by patient labor and Perseverance in it, so to oblige God to their assistance, without whom nothing can be done.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIX.

Of Tepidity or Lukewarmness.

Q. **W**hat do you mean by Tepidity? Is it a want of Fervor at Prayers?

A. The best may, upon some occasion find a want of this Fervor at prayers, and yet are not to be esteem'd Tepid or Lukewarm Christians. Nay, they may be performing an acceptable Devotion, even while they feel a want of it, if, under that want they labor to raise their Spirits to God, and with courage go on, patiently bearing the trouble of their present darkness. The same may happen to Good Christians, in frequenting the Holy Communion; they may sometime approach to the Holy Table, without comfort, and without any feeling of Sensible Devotion; and yet nothing of this the effect of Tepidity, but of an unsearchable Providence, which Distributes blessings not by our measures, and even then secretly works in Souls, giving great Blessings, when it denies the Comforts of them.

Q. What

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Q. What then do you mean by Tepidity?

A. I mean a certain Indifferency of Spirit, which do's not wholly lay aside the Duties of Religion, but will not take the pains to perform them well. Hence a person Subject to this evil, may be seen in the practice of Christian Exercises, but yet goes about them in such a manner, as if it were no concern to him, whether they were done or no; and is so little Solicitous to do them well, that he seems to think it not worth his labor to take pains in them.

Hence, First, such an one says his Prayers, without any inward Sense of what he is doing; but with a mind carry'd away with all occurring thoughts; and outwardly behaves himself in such an undecent manner, that either his Sloathful Lolling, or Giddy Gazing discover his mind not to be concern'd in God. And how easily do's he quite omit this duty, while Sleep and Sloth and every Accident takes place of it?

2. As to the Sacraments, he frequents them but seldom, as being not Solicitous for that interior Benefit and Help, which is to be obtain'd

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by them; but if Custom, or the Satisfaction of others prevail with him, it is done with so much Indifferency and little labor, that he has more reason to fear the Judgment threatned to the Unworthy, than expect the Blessing promis'd to such, as approach in a better manner.

3. If he observes himself subject to Failings, he may think of reforming, and sometimes undertake it; but his Resolutions are soon defeated, he is discourag'd with the first difficulties, and rather chooses to go on the old way, than undergo the Trouble of amendment.

4. If he purposes to take a view of himself, it is done with such an imperfect glance, that he is a Stranger to himself, and lies under a manifold guilt, which is pointed at by his Neighbors, and made the matter of their wonder, while it is not at all discern'd by him.

5. Company is a general snare to him; so that tho' he foresees the Inconvenience, and has a Sense of his own Weakness, in being too easily impos'd on; yet he has not resolution to disengage himself, nor Courage enough for duty, but rather tame-
ly

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ly yields; being too lazy to be singly good.

6. He cannot bear good Disciplin; and therefore seldom observes Order, and is always Uncertain in whatever he proposes or undertakes: whence nothing go's on thrivingly either of this world or the next.

7. He avoids those, whose Charity makes them desirous of his amendment. Good Books have no relish in them, Idle Divertisements and unprofitable Conversation are all his Comfort.

8. He knows not what to do at home, and abroad he is a Vagabond.

By these Characters you may perceive, what is meant by a Tepid Christian, and see a difference between his unhappiness and those others of better Principles, who many times experience a great barrenness in their Souls. For tho', in effect, they seem alike, being both without Sense of duty or of God; yet they are very different in the Cause, whilst Sloth and Willful Negligence is the Fault in the one, and the other labors like a good Christian, tho' he be depriv'd of the comfort of his endeavors.

Q. But

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Q. But where lies the great Fault of the Tepid Christian?

A. First, that he has not a True Faith of God, nor a due apprehension of his Infinit Majesty, nor Fear of his Justice, nor sense of his dependance on him; and hence he is no more solicitous to serve him, than if he were a dumb Idol, neither capable to reward or punish.

2. That he is not Sensible of Eternity, and has no more concern for securing future happiness, than if it were a dream.

3. That hence he lives under the guilt of a great Folly, in not having a due value for God and the eternal well-being of his Soul: and under a great Injustice, in not giving God his due, nor serving him with Fidelity, nor providing for his Soul.

4. That he is guilty of an other Folly, in pretending to heaven, and not considering, what is necessary for obtaining it. So that while the Gospel prescribes a Watchful laborious and Penitential life; while it requires Self-denial, and forsaking the world, and Crucifying the Flesh, Abounding in every good work, working out our Salvation with fear and trembling, not to be weary

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weary in well doing, to prove what is acceptable to the Lord, to walk circumspectly to understand what is the Will of God, to redeem the time, to put on the whole armour of God, to walk worthy of our vocation, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, and not to be conform'd to this world, but to prove, what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God ; while the Gospel, I say, requires Christians to perform these and many other such Duties, as Conditions for obtaining the eternal Inheritance ; the Tepid Christian go's on his own lazy way, without any Solitude of doing what is enjoyn'd, and not regarding the Terms, hopes to partake of the Promises. And what is this less, than the folly of him, who proposing a journey of great concern, should either sit still at home, or lie down in the way, and yet hope to arrive safe at the place desir'd ?

Q. If this be the Condition of Lukewarm Christians, what can you advise them for their amendment ?

A. I would advise them to study the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and there observe, what was the life of Jesus, and what is prescrib'd to his Followers. If they

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they can find there encouragement for their Sloth and Indifference, and Promises of heaven to those, who labor not for it, I have nothing to except against them. But if it be there evident, that they are wanting in the Conditions prescrib'd, and that the method of their life is not according to the Gospel; then let them conclude, that something more is to be done, see in particular what it is, and that they are not in the way of Salvation, till they in earnest endeavor to walk in the ways of the Gospel.

2. This ought to be the subject of their most serious thoughts for half an hour, every day, either walking, or kneeling.

3. A Pious Person ought to be made choice of, whose Experience may direct them in this work.

4. Some Points ought to be consider'd every day, proper for quickening in them some new life: As, first, the Infinit Love of God and Desire of our Salvation. 2. The Laborious method undertaken by Christ for our redemption. 3. The Life of Christ and his Apostles; how much they labor'd and suffer'd, for gaining the Crown. 4. The Retirement

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Austerities and Rigorous Disciplin practis'd by Primitive Christians and other Servants of God, for working out their Salvation. 5. What labors men undergo for worldly Interest or Preferment. 6. How fond they are of Ease and Quiet; how unwilling to be disturb'd, how averse to Trouble: What pains ought they then to take, for making provision for Eternal Rest, and being deliver'd from endless Disquiets, from Racks and universal misery everlasting?

If this method were undertaken in some convenient Retirement, and usual Conversation broken off with violence, the Sincerity of the Undertaking, carry'd on with Patience, Courage and Perseverance, would be very Powerful with God, for obtaining his Assistance, and be a Means for gaining New life to the Soul.

C H A P. XXX.

Of Prayer.

Q. **W**hy is Prayer Necessary?

A. Because it is the Means appointed by God, for obtaining his
Grace

Grace, for the Relief of all our Necessities. *Ask, and it shall be given you.* Luk. 11. 9.

Q. What are our Necessities?

A. They are so great and Universal, that we are not able to do any thing of our selves, not so much, as to think a good thought. 2. Cor. 3. 5. Job. 15. 5. So that being under the obligation of many great Duties, both as to doing good, and avoiding evil, we are not capable of performing any the least part of them, but *our sufficiency is of God.*

Q. By Prayer then we are to seek Remedy of all our Complaints?

A. God has so ordain'd it; whence such, as neglect this Exercise, neglect their Salvation, and cannot wonder, if they lie under many evils, who will not use the Means to be deliver'd from them.

Q. In what manner ought a Christian to Pray?

A. Not by saying over Prayers only or repeating words; for all this may be no more than Lip-service, of which God has declar'd his abhorrence. Nor yet by a dry and barren speculation of Divine Mysteries; but by raising up the heart to God. Prayer therefore is the Cry of the heart to God, sensible
of

of its great misery, and earnestly desirous to be deliver'd from it. And this being the effect of the Divine Spirit, it must be by this Spirit all are to be taught to Pray.

Q. Then ought not all to ask for this before they begin to pray?

A. This ought to be their First Prayer, and is the best Preparation for all that follows. Prayer is an Exercise of great Concern, and of as great Difficulty, and to undertake it, without thus invoking the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, is Rashness, Presumption and Tempting God.

Q. In what manner may a Christian ask the help of the Holy Spirit?

A. By first Confessing himself incapable of performing this Exercise, and then beseeching the Holy Spirit to move, raise and inflame his heart, to preserve in his mind a true sense of his misery, and form in him the Desires of a better State.

Q. If Prayer be the Cry of the heart to God, how many sorts of Prayer are there?

A. As many sorts, as there are ways of the Heart, sending forth or expressing these Cry to heaven: whether

ther it be in the Motions of the Heart only, or in Words, or in Sighs or Tears. So that in whatever manner the Heart be rais'd to God, in whatever manner it expresses its Desires, it is to be esteem'd Prayer.

Q. If this be Prayer, may not then a Person pray at all times, and in all business?

A. He may so: for whatever be the employment of the hands, the Heart is generally at liberty; and if this, sensible of its manifold misery, cries to God for help, it then prays: this may be done at all times, and thus may *S. Paul's* Advice be observ'd, *Pray without Ceasing, 1 Thess. 5. 17.*

Q. Then none can pretend an excuse for not praying?

A. There may be hindrances from joyning or meeting with others in public or Family-Prayers; but these can be no excuse for not Praying; because those, who are in Shops, in the Kitchen, in the Streets or in the Field; those who are at the Anvil, the Wash-hole or the Wheel; those who are confin'd by Sicknes, by chains or in the Gallies, have still their
K hearts

hearts and Thoughts at liberty; with these they may represent their miseries to God, may Complain to him of their Unhappiness, send up their Desires to him, and importune his Mercy for their Relief. Let them but consider, when they have any Project in their head, when they are bent with earnestness upon any Design, when their hearts are passionately engag'd to any Object, how no sort of business, in such cases, ties up their Thoughts, but these are still at liberty; with these they muse, contrive and resolve, wherever they are, and whatever employment busies their hands; let them consider this, and they will soon find it very practicable, to pray at all times; and that they deceive themselves, in pretending to have just Excuses for not Praying.

Q. Then you don't require any Decency in saying of Prayers, who thus suit them with all Times, Places and Business?

A. Yes, there is still a Decency to be observ'd in Prayer, especially when it is Solemn or Public. For tho' God will ever have regard to a Heart rais'd to him, whatever business may otherwise employ the hands, or whatever

ever the Posture be, whether Walking Sitting or Lying down; yet still when a Christian has time and opportunity for wholly applying himself to God in Prayer, which I call here Solemn Prayer, it is certain this ought to be perform'd with Respect and Decency.

Q. Why so?

A. Because any Action solemnly perform'd to God, as a part of his Worship, ought to be perform'd in a manner becoming him. Holy things ought to be done in a holy manner.

Q. As how?

A. In saying Prayers upon the knees; because Custom has so made it, (besides other Authority) that this is a Respectful way of paying our Homage to God and offering our Petitions to him.

Q. What think you of Leaning, Lolling or kneeling on one knee?

A. If Weakness or any Infirmary be the Occasion of it, it is not to be reprov'd; and God who sees the Necessity, will never charge it as Disrespect.

Q. But as to others?

A. In others it must be a Fault; because it is not becoming God, and discovers a want of Respect.

Q. How so?

A. Because in many cases, the Outward Behavior or Posture of the Body discovers the inward Disposition of the mind. When one is gazing about at his prayers, and turning to every thing, that passes, it is plain, that the mind of such an one is not fix'd on God. And it is as plain, when a Person behaves himself undecently in the Presence of God, that such an one has neither a due Sense of God, as to Love, Fear or Adoration, nor of his own misery, and of the Dependence he has on God, for its remedy. And do you think then, there is not a Fault in praying in an irreverent manner?

Q. If this be true, who can deny it?

A. Observe but how the Laziness, Dulness and Carelessness of the Body, betray like ill qualities in the Soul, and then you will concur with me; that, saying Prayers in a lazy, slothful manner, speaks plainly the Indisposition of the mind. When a Christian has a lively apprehension of God's infinit Majesty, this sense of the mind affects the Body, and it appears in certain visible marks, the effects and arguments of the Inward Reverence: it is the same, as to the other part; outward Irreverence

rence is the effect of that, which is within; and a Person, that behaves himself disrespectfully towards God, shews, that his heart is not possess'd with a due respect to him, wherefore without any reflection upon such as are Sickly, weak or under any Indisposition, I desire all others to observe themselves, and never to excuse it from a Fault, if Sloth, Carelesness, or Irreverence appear in the posture of saying their Prayers.

Q. What is your opinion of those, who seem to think, all Holiness consists, in saying a great Number of Prayers; and for the Solitude of saying their whole Task, huddle all over without Attention or Reverence?

A. It is certainly good to have a Time for daily Prayer, and likewise a Task to be duly perform'd; for this is good Discipline, and it must be a Commendable Piety in Christians, not to permit this Time of Prayer to be taken out of their hands by ordinary accidents. But still they must remember, their Acceptance with God, depends not on the Length or Number of their Prayers, but upon their saying them well;

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and therefore, that it is much better
to say a few Prayers with Attention
and Devotion, then to huddle over a
great many, with the Solitude of
finishing a Task. This Huddling way
then is not good; neither is it good
to let Idleness, Gossiping, unnecessary
business &c. Steal away the Time,
that should be given to Prayer; there
is a want of Reverence in the Former
way, and a want of Zeal and Piety
in this; both then ought to be mend-
ed by such, as desire to do well.

C H A P. XXXI.

Of Distractions and Driness in time of Prayer.

Q. **W**HAT do you mean by Di-
stractions in Prayer?

A. I mean all such Thoughts, as
occur in time of Prayer, that belong
not to Prayer.

Q. But if the Thoughts, that occur,
have no harm in them?

A. If they are not evil in themselves;
yet they are evil in time of Prayer;
because it is both against Reason and
the Respect we owe to God, to be think-
ing

ing of any thing else, when we are speaking to him.

Q. Are all such Thoughts Sinful?

A. If a Person willingly and with reflection entertains them, they are an Offence. But if, upon first observing them, he turns his mind from them, and raises it to God, he cannot then be charg'd with the guilt; except there has been some affected negligence, in not taking notice of them so soon as he might. Whence, if a Person at Prayer, dwells long upon impertinent thoughts, it argues some neglect; since not to be Watchful then, cannot be excus'd from a fault.

Q. But if Distracting or Impertinent Thoughts return again, when they have been remov'd?

A. If they return five hundred times, and are so often turn'd out again, there is no fault in them.

Q. Can such Prayer be acceptable, which is thus interrupted and disturb'd?

A. Yes very acceptable: for tho' it be not Quiet Prayer, nor with the mind long fix'd on God: yet the Spirit has been altogether united to God, in fighting his battle, and laboring to discharge faithfully its duty to him.

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And therefore if Christians thus disturb'd in their Devotions, can find that they have carefully endeavor'd to put from them all Unseasonable and distracting Thoughts, they ought not to be disquieted within themselves; for tho' they have no satisfaction in such Prayer, yet there can be no question of its being accepted by God, who being witness of their Fidelity, will not fail to be their Rewarder.

Q. Is there no help, for preventing Distraction?

A. Not altogether; because of the Devil's Malice, and our own Weakness: but if we do what lies in our power, they cannot then be imputed to us.

Q. What is it we can do?

A. First, there is to be due care us'd, not to live under the guilt of Wilful Sin. The reason is, because Good Prayer is the effect of God's Grace, and the work of the Holy Spirit moving and raising the heart to God. Now how can this be expected by such, as live enemies to God? How can these hope for any particular protection, from the malicious attempts of the Enemy, or from their own Corruption? A Good
life

life then is the best foundation of good Prayer. Where there is this Preparation, the mind is more free from the disquiets of many Passions, it is with more earnestness carry'd towards God, and the Priviledge of his Grace may be more reasonably expected by those, who are Faithful in his Service.

Q. Then I see, you despair of their Praying well, who are in sin?

A. What do's the Scripture say? *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, his Prayer shall be an abomination.* Prov. 28. 9. Till Sinners have sincere Desires of being converted to God, and heartily seek his Grace, I can see no reason to think, they Pray well, or that their Prayers will be heard.

Q. What other help can you prescribe, to prevent Distractions?

A. That Christians labor to moderate all kinds of Passions, Affections, Desires and Solitudes, as to things of this world; that they withdraw themselves from such Entertainments Diversifements, Conversation, Books, as fill the mind with unprofitable Ideas; and live in as much Retirement, as Circumstances will allow.

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Q. Is not this to advise people to go out of the world?

A. They, who have the least to do in it, are in the best circumstances. All, that I advise, is, to leave the unnecessary part of it. If Persons find, that standing in the midst of a Croud they cannot pray, they must go out of it, as well as they can, or else their Complaints are vain. And what then are those to do, who, at Prayer, find their Minds crouded with a thousand vain, Idle, Impertinent Thoughts? If these are their hindrance, they must set their minds at greater liberty. And how can this be, but by forsaking, as much as may be, the Occasions of their disquiet? But for this they need not go out of the world, but only moderate every concern of it.

Q. And if persons should do thus, will they be exempt from Distractions in Prayer?

A. No, but still more Quiet than others. And if they be not, yet there is a very great Difference.

First, that the Distractions of Moderate, Pious and Retir'd Christians, are not brought upon themselves thro' their own fault, but are such, as they know not how to avoid: and this is a great

great Comfort to them, both in bearing the trouble with Patience, and standing against them with courage. It is not so in other Christians, who live a vain, Unprofitable and Dissipated life; who daily feed and enlarge their Passions and Desires, and open their hearts to all that is Idle or Impertinent: for these have no Distractions in Prayer, but what are their own fault; every return of them is a Reproach of their guilt; and here can be no Peace amidst these, but what must be the effect of the same Carelessness in Prayers, which attends them all the day, and hinders them from being ever Serious: and what is this, but the Peace of not thinking?

2ly, That the Distractions of Good Christians are permitted for their greater improvement in virtue, and making them more Humble and more Depending on God: whilst in others, they are the effect and punishment of their Sin,

Q. Do's God then try Good Christians with Distractions in time of Prayer?

A. Yes, and sometimes with such a Driness of Spirit, that they find no
Com-

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Comfort or Sense of Devotion, in whatever Prayers they say. And yet if these go on Constantly performing their Exercise of Prayer, resolving to omit nothing on their parts, notwithstanding the discouragements they meet with, their Fidelity will be most acceptable to God, and he will again return with light and blessings to them, who continu'd Faithfull to their duty, even when they had no Light or comfort to help them on.

Q. Is this what you advise, in time of such Driness of Spirit?

A. It is what all ought to do; so that whether it be the Trial of virtue, or the punishment of some Neglect; yet still it must be advisable to go on Faithful in every duty. Therefore those are to be reprov'd who, at such time, become Melancholy and Dejected in Spirit, concluding God to be angry, and that he has withdrawn himself from them, and hence have no heart to read or pray or go about any thing for the good of their Souls, since all seems to be to no purpose. These are to be reprov'd, I say, for presumptuously judging God's Judgments, and there

there lying down in despair, where they have a great work upon their hands, and a fair opportunity of advancing strongly towards Heaven.

Q. What then should they do?

A. I have already told you. They are to humble themselves under the hand of God: they are to leave themselves entirely to God; they are to beseech him to lay no burthen on them, but such, as he will give them strength to bear: they are, by a sincere Repentance, to endeavor to make their Peace with God, and turn away whatever, anger they have provok'd by their sins: [Lastly, they are to go on in every duty, with Patience, waiting till God shall visit them with Comfort and light. If they take this method, all their Barrenness of Spirit, whether it be the Punishment of past neglect, or the Trial of their virtue, will be improv'd to their advantage, and they will be great Gainers by what they groan'd under as their misfortune.

C H A P. XXXII.

Of Repentance.

Q. What is true Repentance?

A. A Hearty Sorrow for having offended God : or a Conversion of the heart from Sin to God.

Q. Is all sorrow for Sin to be confided in, as a true Repentance?

A. No ; for many Sinners reflecting upon their ill state, are troubled at it ; yet this Trouble, tho' for Sin, is not Repentance ; whilst they presently smother it, giving check to such uneasy thoughts, and never putting a stop to their Sinful course.

Q. Well, but if they resolve to make their peace with God, and in prayer are troubled for their offences, and ask for Mercy ?

A. All this may be without Repentance : for there are some tempers, who having a natural Tendernefs, are presently touch'd, upon reading some Prayers, or upon hearing some awakening Discourse, and tho' so sensibly mov'd, as to break forth into sighs and tears, yet presently forget all, without any Endeavors or farther Thoughts of Amendment ;

mendment; now is it not plain, that this sorrow for sin is no Repentance?

Q. What Sorrow do you call this?

A. A sorrow of the Spirit, but not of the Heart. The Spirit of man is mov'd upon the consideration of its unhappy State, and the apprehension of punishment: but the Heart is still hardned, and the Serious resolution of amendment enters not into it; so that whatever good Proposals are made, yet it heartily undertakes nothing.

Q. Is not this to bring all to Uncertainty, and to raise confusion in a business of this great Concern?

A. It is to prevent Confusion in a business of so great concern. For if Christians should mistake every passing Trouble, that touches them, for True Repentance, and conclude their Peace to be made with God, because they have pray'd with tears, and with a Sense of their unhappy state, how easily might they, by so doing, prepare for everlasting Confusion, by finding all their sins, at the last hour, charg'd against them, from which they had a long time suppos'd themselves discharged?

Q. What then do you prescribe, for more security in this Case?

A. Pray-

A. Prayers, Tears, Sighs and all kind of Trouble for Sin are good Signs in every Sinner, that thinks of Repentance, but yet such is the Insincerity of our Nature, such the Uncertainty of our inward Motions, such our Inconstancy in the Proposals of Good, that Christians ought not to depend upon them, as the Evidence of a Sincere Repentance, except he finds them attended or follow'd close with such good Endeavors, as may be proper, in the case, for the amendment propos'd and the beginning a New life.

Q. What Endeavors are these to be?

A. These cannot be here set down in particular; because there is a great variety in the Disorders of the Soul, as of the Body, and as great Difference in the Remedies proper for them and the methods of their Cure. It is enough here to consider, that when the Soul is under any Sinful Disorder (as of Sensuality, Intemperance, Pride, Covetousness, Prodigality, Love of the World &c) there is as great Necessity of using Remedies, or doing something for its Cure, as in case of a broken Leg or Disjoyned Arm; and it is no less presuming

ing upon Miracles, to expect help, without using proper Means for it.

Q. Is there nothing more Particular can be said upon this point?

A. Yes, something may be added; by considering farther, that the amendment of some sins depends upon avoiding the Occasions of them, as in case of Drunkenness, Immoderate Gaming, Prodigal Expences, or any kind of Sensuality; when a Christian looking back upon his past sins, observes, that such Company and such Particular Conversation has been the Provocation or occasion of whatever sins he has committed in that kind: here, in this case, neither Prayers, nor Tears, nor Sorrow for sin can be depended on, as the effects of a Sincere Repentance, except he absolutely resolves upon separating from such Occasions, and effectually takes care to put in execution, what he has thus resolv'd.

2. A Christian finding his Sin to be, in wasting his Estate and exposing his Family to great Inconveniencies, by his Extravagant Expences and Disorderly life; can have no Confidence in his Tears or Trouble of mind, except he in fact retrenches his Expences, and reforms

reforms the disorders of his life, by the observance of better Disciplin.

3. A Christian finding his Sin to be, in his little Concern for God, his Soul and Eternity, and this occasion'd by his Sloth, immoderate indulging Sleep, little application to Prayer and Good Books, being Fond of Unprofitable, Idle and Disorderly Company, Observing no Disciplin, Following with eagerness all kind of Dissipations and Divertisements, may have his time of Serious Thoughts, Pray, Sigh, lament his unhappiness and beg pardon for his great Neglect of Salvation, and manifold Transgressions, and yet without any degree of true Repentance, except he puts a stop to his former method, and undertakes a new life.

4. A Christian finds his Sin to be, in a Custom of Backbiting, promoting Dissensions, Lying, Swearing, Cursing, &c. He with tears asks Forgiveness of God, with sighs bewails his misery, and inwardly finds a weight of Grief oppressing his Spirits; and yet, if upon this he keeps no stricter Guard upon his lips than usual, but boldly or heedlessly go's on in all his former liberties, his Repentance is to be suspected, as Counterfeit, and he has reason

son to condemn himself of being so Insincere with God and his own Soul, in an affair of this weighty Concern.

5. A Christian finds his Sin to be in Stubborness, Pride, Passion, and in his Affections with violence carrying him to undue or sinful Objects: he sighs at his unhappy circumstances, and often with grief asks Pardon: but if he do's not endeavor, by frequent Humiliations and Self denials, to bring his own Will into better Government, and break the violence of his Passions; what Confidence can be had in all his Trouble of mind; since for want of manifesting it self in these good effects, there is too much reason to fear its not being a Trouble to Repentance?

From these Instances it appears, that in all Habitual and Wilful sin, there are Particular endeavors to be us'd, for its amendment, and that since the End of Repentance is the Amendment of sin, That Repentance is to be suspected, as not Sincere, which appearing in Prayers, Tears or some passing Trouble only, is not follow'd with serious Considerations of what Endeavors are necessary for Amendment, and with the Execution of such Endeavors. These are the Steps of
Hearty

Heartly and Sincere Repentance, especially in all Sins Habitual and Customary; And by these it is to be distinguish'd from that, which is only Superficial and Insincere.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Of the Endeavors of True Repentance, for the Amendment of Life.

Q. FROM what has been already said in the foregoing Chapter, I see, True Repentance is to be accompany'd with Endeavors for amendment of life; but this being a Point of concern, I desire to know, what kind of Endeavors these ought to be, and to what degree they ought to arise, for Satisfying Conscience and delivering it from all Anxiety and Disquiet.

A. To give some Satisfaction in this point, I lay down two Rules or Heads, which ought to be particularly regarded in Repentance, and from which the Measures are to be taken of the Endeavors for Amendment of life.

First,

First, That the endeavors of Amendment ought to be proportion'd to the Difficulty of Amending.

Second, That the Endeavors of Amendment ought to be proportion'd to the great Concern of the Undertaking; it being in the Cause of God, of Salvation and of our Eternity.

Q. How are they to be proportioned to the difficulty of Amending?

A. Do you not remember, what Christ says, Luk. 14. 28. *Which of you, intending to build a Tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? — Or what King going to make war with another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able, with ten Thousand, to meet him, that cometh against him with twenty thousand?* In which words, we are put in mind, that whoever acts rationally and prudently, must, in every work he undertakes, see that he be provided with, and make use of Means proper and Sufficient for accomplishing the work propos'd.

Q. How is this apply'd to our present purpose?

A. That whoever proposes Amendment of life, do's not act rationally
or

or prudently; if he makes not use of such Means, as may be proper for effecting what he proposes; and, consequently, if the Amendment be difficult, there must be some Means resolv'd upon and undertaken answerable to the Difficulty; or else the Undertaking is not Rational, but in vain.

Q What is the Practice of this Doctrine?

A. That Repenting Sinners, who are serious in their Resolutions of Amendment, ought not to content themselves with Prayer only; but to consider the Disorder in which they are, and accordingly as they find it, Great or Little, violent or Moderate, so to use proper Means for overcoming it. For tho' Prayer be Good, yet to Pray and lie still, where work is to be done, is Mocking and Tempting God, even as lying in a ditch and crying, God help me; and to use Means not proportion'd to the Difficulty, is the next degree of the same Mockery, like weeding a Garden with a broom, or curing a Gangreen with a Cobweb.

Q. If a Person has try'd what he judg'd proper, and without any effect?

A. What

A. What do Physicians or Surgeons in the like case? They repeat the same again, and if they have reason to suspect the medicine too weak for the Distemper, they order something of stronger Operation; and if nothing else will do, they cut off one part to save the rest. Thus is Repentance to proceed; it tries variety of Means, and, if without Success, it tries again something more violent; and if still the stubborn distemper will not yeild, then, without any regard to convenience, Interest or Ease it cuts off even that, which is as dear to Nature, as Hand or Eye, choosing rather thus to make Nature suffer in one part, then stand still and let all be lost.

Q. Is not this hard Doctrin?

A. It is what Christ has taught us: *If thy hand or foot Scandalize (or offend) thee; cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life lame or maim'd, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And, if thy eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell. Mat. 18. 8. And what*

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what is this, but if that be the Occasion of our Sin, which is as dear or Necessary to us, as our Hand or Eye, we are to separate it from us, and choose rather to Suffer such a Loss, than by living on in Sin, to lose our Soul? Here the most violent Remedy is prescrib'd, where it is necessary for the Cure. A like proportion must be observ'd in all other Cases, and that is, what the Baptist preach'd to Sinners, where he says; *Bring forth worthy fruits of Penance: or, Bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*; which in the Margin of the English Bible an. 1665 is thus expounded; *Fruits answerable to amendment of Life*. If this be not done in all cases, the Sorrow for Sin is to be suspected, as not being the Sorrow of True Repentance.

Q. What do you mean by your Second Rule, That the Endeavors of Amendment ought to be proportion'd to the great Concern of the Undertaking; it being in the Cause of God of Salvation and of Eternity?

A. I mean, That whoever is serious, must do business of a great Concern with a great Care; and there being no other business of Greater Con-

Concern to a Christian under the guilt of Sin, than True Repentance and Amendment of Life, if he do's not, in this work, use the greatest Care, it is to be fear'd, he is not Serious, in what he undertakes.

Q. Have you any Instance, that may give light to this?

A. If a Person, in a Business where in his life depends, should be no more diligent in Soliciting and managing it, than if it were a thing of no value, and as if he were indifferent, whether he had Success or no: would not this careless way of Proceeding condemn him of great Folly or Madness, in not knowing or valuing what he did? If a Person should undertake to defend a Town against an Enemy, and take no care to put men into it, or to repair Fortifications or raise Works, would not this be Children's Play in the greatest concern? If a Rich Jewel were lost, and no more care us'd for finding it, than if it were a worthless Trifle, would not this arraign the Undertaker of Deceit or Folly?

Q. How is this to be apply'd?

A. That Amendment of life being a business of the highest concern, it
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ought to be done with the greatest care, so Reason and Faith require: and whoever, upon undertaking it, do's not proceed with the Care, Diligence, Solitude, Industry, Watchfulness, as is due to the importance of the design, but presently lays by the thought and forgets what he has undertaken, or, if he thinks of it, is so little concern'd, that he uses no more care in it, than if it were a matter of Indifferency; it is plain from hence, that such a Person is not in earnest, that his Trouble for Sin was not Repentance, and that his management of the Cause of God and his Soul, when duly examin'd, will prove no more Serious, than that of Children's-play.

Q. Then you will allow of no Repentance to be Sincere, which is not attended with such Suitable endeavors?

A. This is a General Rule, and if there be any Exceptions, yet they are not to be depended on: for as the Tree is known by the Fruit, so is Repentance, by the Fruit it brings forth. And where there is no Fruit, that is, no Endeavors, such as may be proper in the Case, for Amendment, there is reason to question the whole Proceeding, as
only

only Ceremonious and Eternal, but not Hearty and Sincere. If this Doctrine should raise scruples, it is what I desire; for I cannot but fear, there are too many, who mistake Repentance, and presume of Forgiveness of their sins, when by their little Care for Amendment, they have reason to think themselves still under the whole guilt of them.

C H A P. XXXIV.

Of Scruples and Immoderate Fears.

Q IF all Repentance is to be suspected, as you have declar'd, which is not attended with Endeavors proper for Amendment, will not Christians be hence perplex'd with endless Scruples, who observe no Amendment in themselves, fearing all to proceed from their Neglect, in not using due Endeavors?

A. To prevent mistake in this Doctrine, I must distinguish Two sorts of Christians: One of such as live under the guilt of Wilful sin, of whatever kind it be, and often fall into it: the other of those, who are Sensible of no other Failings, but such, as are almost

inseparable from us in this state of Weakness.

As to the Former sort, under Wilful Sin, if they use not due Endeavors for Amendment, but have reason to accuse themselves of Neglect, it is fit, they should have scruples, and from the sense of their Neglect, be Solicitous to do better.

But if they earnestly desire to overcome themselves, consider and take advice of the most proper Means, labor seriously and are truly Solicitous to accomplish their works; then there is no reason for scruples, altho' they find not the effect of their Endeavors. Because they are using the Means, and tho' not with the desired effect, yet this may be no fault of theirs, but according to the Secret of God's Counsels, who often permits Sinners to abide along time in this state of recovering from Sin, so to make them more Humble, and to convince them, that their Amendment is not from themselves, but from God giving a Blessing to their endeavors.

The only thing therefore these have to do, is to go on using Means for their Amendment, being Humble under the want of Success, and with Patience wait-

waiting, till God shall shew favor to them; still considering and asking advice, whether there be any thing else they can do, which may prove more effectual to their purpose. For Amendment of life being their business, they must still be industrious in it, and never be tir'd; it being certain, that those Endeavors are very often not in vain, but much to their advantage, which, to their appearance, are without effect.

Q. Now, as to the other sort of Christians, who are guilty only of such Weaknesses, as are almost inseparable from us?

A. These sort of Christians are not concern'd in the Rules, I have given to others; and therefore have no reason to take occasion of Scruple; from what was never spoke to them.

Q. What then, are these not to take notice of their Endeavors for Amendment?

A. I advise them earnestly to desire the Amendment of all the Failings, to which they are Subject; likewise to endeavor it as much as they can, and to take notice of their Endeavors as much as they please: but I would not have them suspect their

Repentance of Insincerity, if they do not find their Endeavors for Amendment follow'd with Success.

Q. Why not these, as well as the others?

A. Because the Sins of the others are more Wilful, and proceed from a Wilful Neglect, and by better care might be remedy'd. But in these it is not altogether so: for tho' they are really Failings, which they observe in themselves; yet they cannot be judg'd the effect of a Wilful Neglect; since there is no Human care can prevent their Return, but with all the Diligence we can possibly use, still at times, we shall find the effect of that Weakness, which being annexed to this mortal State, we may complain of, but have it not in our power to remedy.

Q. What then are Christians to do in this case?

A. They are to be Patient under the Conditions of their State, and bear the burthen of it with the Submission of an Humble mind. Let them, with all the earnestness of their Soul, desire to be Perfect, as Angels; but let not this desire make them Impatient under the Unhappiness of their
pre-

present State. They, who will come into the land of Promise, must not murmur, but, with Submission, bear the Difficulties Wants and Trials of the Desert. For it is by such a Submission, they make the best preparation for the Happiness they desire.

Q. Is there any good use they can make of their daily Imperfections?

A. Yes, a very good use, if they will have but patience under the trouble of them.

First, these may serve to keep them Humble. We are ever in danger of Pride; and never more in danger, than when we see no Imperfection in our selves. This is a sight, it may be, we cannot bear; and therefore it is the effect of a Providential Mercy, to permit a mixture of imperfections in us, by this lesser evil to preserve us from a greater.

2. These Imperfections may oblige them to walk with more circumspection and Fear of themselves, and deliver them from the dangers of Rashness and presumption.

3. They may see in them their great dependance on God, who find all their own Endeavors so ineffec-
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al in such ordinary conflicts or attempts.

4. These may make them more Feruent in their Prayers, who see the absolute necessity of God's daily help: more constant in humbling themselves before God and asking Mercy, who see the daily want of it: more Compassionate and Patient with their Neighbor in his Failings, from the daily experience of their own.

5. These may serve to lessen in them the love of this world, who see it a State inseparable from evil; and hence give them a stronger Desire of being deliver'd from this body of Sin and death.

These and many other good effects may follow, if, whilst they endeavor to overcome all Imperfections, they yet preserve peace and Patience under the Trouble of such, as they cannot yet master.

Q. But if they follow not this Advice?

A. Then there will follow as many ill effects.

First, they will be disquieted with endless Scruples, seeking and laboring for Comfort, but finding none.

2. They

2. They will have no Satisfaction in Prayer or Sacraments, or other good Exercises.

3. Dejection will seize upon them, they will apprehend all they Suffer, to be the effect of God's Anger, and hence fearing all they do to be to no purpose, will be tempted to do nothing.

4. They will fall into immoderate Fears, these will weaken their Spirits, injure their health, rack them with anxious thoughts; and these will so wholly possess the mind, that vain Imaginations will not leave it in their power to advance in any good, or permit them to follow or believe the best advice that can be given them: thus they will be unhappy thro' their own ill management.

Q. What must they then do? Is there no remedy?

A. It is much easier to prevent, than cure this evil. The only thing they have to do, is to make choice of a good Adviser, and follow his Direction. They have disorder'd all the Faculties of their Soul, so that they neither see nor judge aright themselves; what then have such to do, but to be advis'd? If they have any

Reason left, it will shew them, that this is Reasonable, and that this is the only means for recovering themselves from that unhappy darkness, which for their stronger delusion, seems to them to be light.

Q. But if they think their Adviser do's not truly understand their Case, or will not believe it?

A. Such are very far gone, and therefore most deceiv'd. There is nothing more easy, than to understand their case. This then is only a Plea to justify the Stubborness of their humor. They are very easy in believing others mistaken, when their greatest interest depends upon believing so of themselves. This must be their way to Peace; for till they become so Humble, as to distrust themselves, and with Confidence and Cheerfulness to obey those, whom God has put over them, they can expect no Cure, but the daily increase of their Distemper.

C H A P. XXXV.

Of Sadness and Melancholy.

Q. **I**S Sadness a Part of Repentance?

A. If it be a Grief or Trouble for having offended God; it is the same as Repentance.

Q. How can it be understood otherwise?

A. It is commonly understood otherwise; not being generally taken to signify Grief for having offended God, but rather an Oppression of the mind, caus'd by some Vexation, lying as a Heavy Weight upon the Spirits. So that while Grief may in some Occasions be reasonable, Sadness is not so, but rather a Passion, which is not justifiable.

Q. But if it be for Sin?

A. Even in this case it is not allowable; for tho' Grief for sin be Reasonable, yet when it settles and fixes into Sadness, then it is a Passion, and therefore not Reasonable.

Q. How can this be?

A. It may easily be a Sin, to become Sad for Sin: for this may be the effect of Vexation, Impatience and Pride,

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Pride, as when a Person resolving upon Amendment, and afterwards relapsing into his usual weakness, loses all patience at the disappointment of his Resolutions, and instead of grieving sincerely for sin, vexes at the experience of his own weakness, and sinks under a weight of Sadness, so as now to think it to no purpose to attempt Amendment any more. Such Sadness as this, is certainly no part of Repentance; but a Weak and Faulty Passion, as having Pride and Presumption at the root, and a great deal of Impatience to make it up.

Sometimes, instead of sadness, this Vexation turns into Anger, and is still far from Repentance. Because True Repentance, tho' it hates sin and punishes it, yet still it is not with a mind exasperated with Passion; for this is an Unreasonable and Vexatious Disturbance, which discomposes, if not blinds the Understanding, judges unjustly, and undertakes rashly, and like a Passionate Judge, Seldom passes a Sentence according to Equity. Whereas Repentance, while it pursues Sin, do's all with a Compos'd Mind, retains Moderation, Meekness and Inward Peace, and thus being in circumstances
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of better discerning all things and Judging aright, it follows the Rules of the Gospel, while it undertakes to reform according to the Gospel.

Q. Well, but if the sadness, you began to speak of, be not Repentance, has it any other good in it?

A. I can tell many evils it has, but no good.

First, if it continues any time, it injures the Health of the Body, and thus brings on many Inconveniencies and variety of Uneasiness, which affects the Mind.

2. It weakens or dulls all the Spirits, by which the Soul acts, and lays the Mind under such an Oppression or Weight, that it has no Courage for any thing, that seems Difficult, and has no vigor or life in whatever it dares undertake.

3. It discomposes the Reason, darkens the Understanding, and disorders the Judgment, so that there is scarce any thing discern'd or judg'd aright, where this Evil prevails: but vain and Chimerical Imaginations, are the Light it sets up, and by these it keeps the Soul a slave to a long Succession of Delusions.

4. It raises many vain and Groundless

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els Fears, which rob the Soul of all Peace; it perplexes it with endless Scruples, which are a hindrance in all, that is good.

5. It lays open the Soul to infinite Temptations; the Devil having many Advantages both in the Laziness of this Passion, and in its Fears, Perplexities and Doubts.

6. It hinders the Improvement of Time, by its charming but useless Amusements, by its Sloth, Uncertainty and Irresoluteness.

7. It destroys very often inward Peace and makes way for Dissensions, by a jealous and Exceptionous humor generally attending it, by which the worst Construction is put upon every thing, that is said or done, and great Malice is discover'd even in the ways of Innocence and the most Sincere Proceedings.

8. It discourages or makes void the best Offices of Charity and Friendship; whilst it perverts the best Advice, taking it generally amiss, and falling either into Passion or Melancholy; So that in the greatest Occasions, Friends choose rather to be Silent, than to venture the effects of their abus'd Charity.

9. Is

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P. It deprives a Christian of the great benefit of being advis'd and directed in the way of Salvation; by making him difficult in following Counsel; by raising Fears, such as put him upon questioning even what is Certain and safe above Dispute; by causing Doubts in Commands, and having greater Regard to his own Imaginations, than to all, that Reason can suggest. And thus the best Advice comes to have no effect.

Q. If the Evil be so great, what is to be done in it?

A. The manifold mischeif of it, both as to Soul and Body, ought to make Christians affraid of it; so as to be Industrious in standing against the First Approaches, and not to comply so far with Humor, as to let in an Enemy, who, if ever he gets footing will scarce be remov'd. To raise cheerfully the heart to God, under all oppressing Thoughts, will be a good Expedient for this; as likewise to endeavor, at all times, to rejoyce in the Will of God being done, and to throw by all Disquiet with as much speed, as may be, in Submission to the Divine Appointment.

Q. But

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Q. But where this Evil has already seisd, what is to be done ?

A. Such Christians ought not to yeild, but Struggle with their Distemper, and Labor to Master it.

First, They are to find some discreet Person, with whom they may, with freedom and Confidence, communicate their Thoughts : one who may be able to set right their Mistakes and ill Constructions, to remove their vain Fears, and give them both Courage and Comfort.

2. They are to consult Proper Persons, to see what help may be expected from Physick, and the Order of Diet.

3. They are not to yeild to, nor sit still under vain Amusements or the working of their Fears.

4. They are to seek some employment, or apply themselves to some Business, such as may take up their Thoughts.

5. They are rather to choose Innocent Recreation or Conversation, than give their Time to Disquieting or Oppressing Thoughts.

6. They are to Suspect their own Reasoning and Judgment, as often as they are commenting upon their own Unhappiness, Pretend to foresee misfortunes,

fortunes; or construe their Neighbors Words or Actions, so as to cause in themselves Disquiets: In these and all other cases of Resentments, they, are to suspect their own Reasoning, put a stop to it, divert it by Discourse, Business or any other way.

7. They are not to indulge themselves in Sleep or bed in the morning, beyond a Seasonable hour; for this Distemper is a Sluggish one, and is fed by Laziness.

8. They are to be in earnest, in using their best endeavors against this evil; they are not to trust their own Opinion, of what they are able to do; but are to labor as against a Monster, which, if not master'd, will master them.

9. They are to choose a Prudent Guide, and resolutely follow his Advice, even in things, where their Inclination makes them averse, and their own Reason gives them no light. For while their Reason is disorder'd; it must be Safer for them to follow a better Guide.

Q. Are not these hard Prescriptions?

A. If these were truly Sensible of the mischiefs of their distemper, they would

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would think nothing difficult, that could give them hopes of cure.

Q. Do you think it a Sinful life?

A. I think it to be more Distemper, Ill management and Indiscretion, than Sin. But being so very prejudicial to all Christian Duties, a Person must be very much to blame, who do's not Consider and ask Advice, and do the best he is able, to overcome it.

Q. If a Person should die, not having overcome Sadness, Melancholy, Scruples &c. can you hope favorably of him?

A. Yes, I can, if he was willing to be advis'd and Sincerely endeavor'd to overcome them. Hence I do not question, but many who are so very much disorder'd in this way, as to have no comfort in whatever they do to be perpetually disquieted, perplexed, rack'd, and to think all they do to be to no Purpose, besides variety of other evil and terrifying Thoughts may find the effects of Mercy at their Departure, even beyond their hopes.

Q. How so?

A. Because in many, all this Disorder proceeds from an earnest Desire of Serving God, and a great Fear

of

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of offending him. Now tho' there be
very ill management in the case and
Indiscretion, and sometimes some other
Ingredients of Humor, Self-conceit
and Pride; yet the Evil, that is in
them, being generally Constitution
and Weakness, and the Good being
of their Choice and Will, joyn'd with
an Abhorrence of Sin, there is great
reason to hope well of them.

C H A P. XXXVI.

Of the Holy Communion.

Q. I Shall ask no questions upon this
Subject, but only what relate
to Practice. Tell me therefore, first,
what ought a Christian to propose,
in coming to this Holy Ordinance?

A. He ought to propose The Par-
ticipation of the Benefits of Christ's
Passion, and in particular to hope for
that Blessing, which Christ himself
proposes, as the proper effect of the
Holy Communion.

Q. What is that effect?

A. That which is set down in the
Sixth Chapter of *S. John*, v 55. 56.

57. *My Flesh is meat indeed, and my
Blood*

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Blood is Drink, indeed: He, that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he, that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.

Q. What is the Particular effect mention'd in these words?

A. It is, That we may abide in Christ, and Christ in us, and that we may live by him: So that all those Christians, who approach to the Holy Table ought to do it for this End, That Christ may dwell in them and they live by him.

Q. Cannot this be explain'd more clearly?

A. I explain it by the Comparison us'd by *S. Paul* on another Occasion. We are like the Wild Olive tree, and of our selves bring forth none, but Wild fruit, that is, the Fruit of Corruption. A Christian ought to desire to bring forth better Fruit, even Fruit to life everlasting; this he cannot do, except Christ be engrafted in him. He approaches therefore to the Holy Table, that by means of that Sacred Food, Christ may be engrafted in his Soul, that so he may not bring forth the Fruit of the Natural

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tural Stock, which is Corrupt, but the Fruit of the Holy Graft, which is Fruit to Salvation.

Q. I see what is to be propos'd as to this ; but are we not to desire, that Christ may dwell in us ?

A. Yes, we are to desire, that Christ may live and dwell in us. We are to desire, that Christ would communicate his Spirit and Life to us ; that so, he becoming the Principle of a New life unto us, we may not live according to the Inclinations of Nature, which, being Corrupt, lead to sin ; but according to the Inclinations of Christ, which being Holy and Divine, lead to God.

By this manner Christ will live in us : because, as Sin lives and reigns in our hearts, when we hear its Suggestions, obey it and are govern'd by it ; so Christ lives in us, when the Actions of our life proceed from him, when we give ear to him, when we obey his voice, follow his Spirit, and make all, that is Corrupt in us, Submit to his Orders. It is easily understood, that the Spirit, that moves us, and is the Beginning of all our Actions of life, is the Spirit which, lives in us, and by which we live ; a Good Christian then
being

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being Sensible, how great his Natural Corruption is, and that his whole life must be Sinful, if he moves by this, desires, that Christ should come within him, take possession of his heart, undertake the Government of it; and if he surrenders himself with an entire-Submission, it is plain then, that moving by the Spirit of Christ, and not his own, Christ dwells in him, and that he lives by Christ.

Q. It is not then a Present or Passing Holiness only, which is to be propos'd, by such, as come to this Holy Banquet?

A. No, it must be more than this, even a Permanent and Abiding Sanctification. They are not to think of doing that Action only well and with due Faith and Recollection of mind; for this is only a Passing Holiness; but they are to purpose the gaining a New Spirit and a New Life, even a life, by which they may live for ever. Hence such, as approach to this Holy Table, with a due Sense of what they do, ought to be mindful, after Receiving, What their Life is to be; that having receiv'd Christ, the Life of Christ ought to be manifested in them; that

they now no more live according to the Old man, which they have put off, nor regard their own Inclinations, nor follow the World, but live by the Spirit of Christ; so that the Fruits of this Spirit be ever found in them, that is, the Love of God and their Neighbor, a Submission to the Will of God, a zeal for his Glory, a Desire to do Good to all, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Long suffering &c. for such is the Spirit and life of Christ.

Q. If this be the Effect of this Sacred Ordinance, and what is to be propos'd by such as partake of it, is it not a great Fault in those, who are not Solicitous; but rather neglect to approach to it.

A. It must certainly be a great fault: for when Christians observe the violence of their own Corruption, the danger they are in from hence of daily falling into sin, and the evident hazard, upon this account, of being eternally miserable; have they not reason to enquire for Remedy? And since Christ, in this Holy Institution, has mercifully provided the Surest Help for overcoming Nature, and establishing the Soul in Grace, must it not be their greatest Interest to make use of it? To neglect it then involves many Crimes; as First
an

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an ingratitude towards God, in taking so little notice of, if not despising, the Appointments of his Mercy. 2^{ly}. A Neglect of Salvation. 3^{ly}. A wilful Abiding in sin. 4^{ly}. An Indifferency as to the Things of God; with a long train of many other Consequential guilts, which are much exaggerated, from that great and general Solicitude, which Christians have in regard of any Temporal Advantages; for to see, how much they are upon the watch, as to these; with what eagerness they catch at them; how sensibly they grieve at the misfortune or Oversight, if any, thro' want of Foresight, has pass'd them by, or, by the greater industry of others, have been taken out of their hands, is enough to condemn them of a most Criminal Sloth or Contempt, in regard of God and their own Souls, when having such Considerable Advantages provided and even offer'd to them, they pass them by with as little concern, as if they were altogether Useless to them.

Q. If they judge themselves Unworthy, what would you have them do?

A. If they are Unworthy of approaching to this Holy Table, are they not much

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much more, so of being admitted into Heaven? The same Unworthiness, which excludes them from One, will shut them out of the other: and do not they know, in this Case, what they are to do? They must either mend or despair: for where can their Hopes be of seeing and possessing God, who judge themselves Unworthy of partaking of his Temporal Ordinance, and will not take care to remove the Unworthiness?

Q. Do not many partake of the Holy Communion, and are so far from being the better for it, that it will be to their greater Condemnation?

A. And will this justify a man for living a Heathen, because many, who believe in God, are not the better for it, but even abuse this Faith to their greater Condemnation? If some abuse and prophane the greatest Blessings and the most Necessary Means of Salvation, they must answer for their own wickedness; but their wickedness can be no warrant for others to neglect the Means of Salvation, or to esteem them useless, without drawing upon themselves a greater weight of guilt, than they will be able to bear. God is Merciful in appointing

us Helps, and the Neglect of them cannot be without Sin.

C H A P. XXXVII.

Of Patience.

Q. IF Christians are to put on Christ, so that his life is to be manifested in them, tell me some Particulars, in which this ought to be, and what he must observe, for gaining this Character of a True Disciple.

A. It will be a great help in this work, if he endeavor to be Patient.

Q. How so?

A. Because to go on with this work well, requires the most serious Application and best Attention of the Soul. Now Patience is that, which very much contributes to this, in the great Freedom it procures, and defending the Soul from those many Disturbances, which otherwise would frequently interrupt the Undertaking, and put it in hazard of being never finished.

Q. How do you understand this?

A. I mean thus; That the Soul, like the Hands, cannot go on with any Difficult work well, if it be Subject
to

to great Disturbances. Now consider a Person, that has but little Patience. Such an one is easily put into disorder; every little Accident disquiets him; an ordinary Provocation raises his Passion; and his mind being thus discomposed and upon the Fret, there is not one thing belonging to his Soul, he can do well. This is a general Hindrance to whatever he proposes of good. He cannot then Pray, nor recollect himself, nor think of Repentance, but it is presently interrupted; he cannot then shew Compassion or Tenderness where it is due, nor scarce speak without giving offence to others, because the disorder of his mind destroys that Moderation and Mildness, without which nothing can be done to Edification.

Q. Then I see, you will have an Impatient Person do nothing well?

A. He is certainly under a great disadvantage, being ever expos'd to variety of disturbances. Experience gives sufficient Proof, how much Inward Peace contributes to the performance of all Spiritual Duties: and since the want of Patience so often disturbs this Peace, it is as evident, that the Impatient Christian lies under

der a very great disadvantage, and, whatever he proposes, is in danger of not doing it well. Christ, in telling us, that *In Patience we shall Possess our Souls*, do's in effect tell us, that by Impatience we loose the Possession of them: And what then can we do, when our Souls, our Reason, our Understanding, our Judgment are not our own, but we have lost the Command of them?

Q. It is evident enough; but what can they do, who are of this Uneasy, Fretful and Impatient Temper?

A. This is a Question becoming a Heathen, who has not Motives or Helps for overcoming Nature: but it ought not to be heard from a Christian; the First Principle of whose Gospel is, that he *Deny himself*, and whose Faith assures him, that Salvation depends upon the Practice of it.

Q. How should this Principle work in him?

A. It should oblige him to such Industry and assiduous Endeavors, in standing against Nature and the Inclination of Temper, as by degrees to work himself, into a better Constitution. It should make him ashamed of being so easily disturb'd with trifles,

flies, when he sees, that every such disturbance, indisposes him and makes him unfit for the Duties of Eternity. Let a Christian but seriously consider himself in the way to Eternity, and that his Salvation depends upon his performance of such Duties, as God has enjoyn'd him, and, if he has any Faith, he must necessarily be confounded, to see himself so easily unfitted for the performance, and, by his concern for Trifles, to loose his concern for heaven. Whoever therefore desires to put on Christ, must first put on Patience, that so he may go on with steadiness in the practice of Such Exercises, by which he is to learn Christ.

Q. Is Patience Necessary upon any other account?

A. Yes, because it is not only a Help for learning Christ, but likewise One Principal Point, by which we are to give Proof of Christ abiding in us.

Q. How is this.

A. The principal Part of our Redemption, which Christ undertook, was in Suffering, and his Suffering with an Humble Patience, by a Sacrifice of his Will to the Will of his Eternal Father, is that which is most worthy

of his Sanctity, and what he most recommends to our imitation. Whoever then proposes to be a Follower of Christ and to live by his Spirit, must manifest it in this particular; he must shew it in the Practice of an Humble Patience, or else he plainly shews, that he knows not Christ, whose Follower he pretends to be, nor lives at all by his Spirit.

Q. How do you clear this?

A. Because as Christ is not Contrary to himself, so neither is his Spirit. Christ then being Meek, Humble, and Patient, wherever he dwells, this must be his Spirit. Those then, who live not by this Spirit, do evidently demonstrate, that Christ or his Spirit, abide not in them.

Q. And yet are there not many Exemplar Christians subject to great Impatience?

A. They cannot be very Exemplar, who are so: because Exemplarity of a Christian consists in being Conform to his Pattern, who is Christ Jesus, and manifesting the Head in the Members, for the edifying of the whole Body. Now where can be the Conformity of Angry, Proud, Impatient Suffering with the Humble Suffering
of

of Christ? And if no Conformity, than no Exemplarity.

Q. Do you then condemn all Impatient Christians?

A. Of not being Exemplar I do: for Impatience is so Remarkably unlike the Spirit of Christ, that however a Christian may abound in other Good Qualities, yet if he be Impatient, this takes off from all the rest, and he must frequently give Offence, instead of good Example. For how is he like his Head.

First, who betrays an Impatience upon every little Pain or Uneasiness; whereas Christ Patiently suffer'd to be Torn and Rack'd in all his Body.

2ly, Who becomes Impatient upon every Thwarting word or little Contradiction; whereas Christ suffer'd a perpetual Contradiction all his life, and even from those, whose good he Sought, and for whom he desir'd to become a Sacrifice.

3ly, Who cannot bear, even deserv'd Reproof without Impatience; whereas Christ, who could deserve none, with Moderation and Mildness heard and answer'd, when the Works of his Infinite Wisdom, Charity and Goodness, were unjustly censur'd by those,

whose Malice would not permit them to understand them aright.

4ly. Who being a Sinner and deserving nothing, is Subject to variety of Inward and Outward Impatience, upon Suffering little Inconveniencies or upon the apprehension of Want; whereas Christ made Choice of all Inconveniencies of life and with Patience suffer'd them, who was Lord of all.

5ly, Who presently discovers Impatience, if every thing be not done to his Will and Humor, being only a Poor, Sinful and contemptible Worm; whereas Christ was contradicted and oppos'd all his life, whose Will was always Holy, and ought to be obey'd.

6ly, Who upon every word of seeming Contempt or of any Reflection, is presently disturb'd; whereas Christ with Patience was expos'd to the Scorn of all, and with Silence heard False Accusations in public advanc'd against him.

Lastly, who looses all Patience, upon being put out of his way, upon more than ordinary labor, upon the disagreeable humor of others, upon little Troubles and losses, that happen; whereas Christ with Patience underwent

went a laborious life, and with an entire Submission to his Father's Will. suffer'd the loss of all Comforts, the greatest of all Torments, and being a Spotless Lamb, gave his life a Sacrifice for Sinners, under the Ignominy of a Malefactor?

This Impatience is not any Resemblance or Conformity to the Head, and therefore whoever indulges it or do's not sincerely labor to overcome it, is not in this Exemplar, and gives not a good proof of Christ or his Spirit abiding in him, Since he is wanting in that, which was the Principal Character of our Redeemer.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Of Troubles and Afflictions.

Q. **A**RE the Troubles and Afflictions of this life always the Punishment of Sin?

A. They are not always so: for tho' *Cain* was afflicted for his Sin, and *Pharaoh*, and the Children of *Israel* in the Desert, and *Saul* and *David* and other Kings of *Israel*; yet we find

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many others visited with severe Afflictions, who were the Faithful Servants of God, and not Punish'd for Sin, as *Abraham Elias, Job, Toby*, the Apostles, the Man born blind, and all the Primitive Martyrs.

Q. What then may be the design of Providence in afflicting the Just?

A. The Scripture mentions some ;
as First, for the Trial of their Fidelity, as in *Abraham, Job, and Toby.*
2ly, For their improvement in vertue.
3ly, For their greater resemblance to Christ their Head. 4ly, For the Increase of their Crown. 5ly, For manifesting the Power of God in such weak vessels. Lastly, That God may be glorify'd.

Q. In what manner are Christians to bear Troubles, and go thro' the Afflictions of this life?

A. With Patience.

Q. By what Motives are Christians to prevail with themselves to be Patient?

A. They have many:

First, because nothing happens to them, but by the Appointment or Permission of God. Now God being all-wise and ordering all for the best, they have reason to Submit to whatever he

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orders, as believing that to be best for them. Again, God's Will is always Holy and always Just, and therefore always Adorable: God's Will then being manifest in whatever happens, it ought always to be Submitted to, and by Submission ador'd.

2ly. They every day ask in the Lord's Prayer, that God's Will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven. If they ask this daily, have not they reason to Submit to it, when they see it done? To make exceptions then and grieve with Impatience, is to unsay their own Prayers, and contradict in their Troubles, what they have been petitioning all their lives.

3ly. We know not what is good for our selves; and that very often, which we grieve for, as our misfortune, is the first step to our Happiness. Did not *Jacob* lament the loss of *Joseph*, and *Joseph* his being falsely accus'd and his Imprisonment; and yet were not all these the Steps, by which Providence manifested it self wonderfully in their behalf, and usher'd in their greatest good? The Nobleman (*Jo. 4. 46.*) griev'd at the Sickness and danger of his Son; and yet this, which he lamented, as the misfortune of his Family,

was

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was the Occasion that brought both him and his Family to Christ.

4. We know not our selves, till we are exercis'd and prov'd by many Trials. We know not our Dependance on God, till we experience our own Poverty and Wants. We know not the World, till we find the Uncertainty and Vanity of all its Goods. If then by Troubles, we are instructed in these Three great Lessons, there is reason to have Patience, with what is so much to our advantage.

5ly. Love of the World and the great value for its Goods, are the greatest Impediments of Virtue, and what make Christians not only most Unwilling, but most Unfit to die. Afflictions are the Surest Remedy against both these Charms; The World being Uneasy is more willingly left; and its Treachery being discover'd, puts Christians upon seeking something more Solid. And is there not some Patience due, where they are so well instructed to Eternity?

6ly. Because God undertaking the Cause of the Oppress'd, to be the Comforter of the Afflicted, the Protector of the Orphan and Widow, and making many Promises to such, as call upon him in their troubles and put
their

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their Trust in him; Christians have reason to be Patient under afflictions, which give them such a Title to the particular Protection of God.

7ly. Because the life of Christ was a life of all kinds of afflictions; the way he walk'd in, was the way of the Cross; if Christians then suffer; they are in this associated or united to their Head; He was Scourg'd and Croun'd with thorns; if they feel the Scourge and the Thorns, let them stand by him, and see if they cannot find Comfort in such Company: if they have their Cross, let them follow their Leader, and say, It is better to suffer with Christ, that we may be glorify'd with him, than to rejoice with the World and have our portion with it.

8ly. Because tho' all Troubles and Afflictions are Uneasy to Nature, which seeks present Peace; yet, if we consider them, as the exercise, which God sends; that they are the Means to purify our Hearts from the love of the World; that they are the way, by which God has led his best Servants, his Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs; that he has promis'd Blessings and an Eternal Crown to such, as suffer with Patience, and that their
for-

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Sorrow shall be turn'd into Joy; in this consideration there is something very Valuable in the Troubles and Afflictions of this life, and what Nature is averse to, which is guided by Sense, Faith may desire and embrace, which is directed, by the Reveal'd Will of God. For if a Christian remembers, that he was born for Eternity, and that his greatest and only true Interest is in gaining Everlasting Happiness, he cannot but think that Valuable and Desirable, which is particularly Serviceable for obtaining this End: this he must do, if he has the life of Faith in him.

These are some Motives, amongst many others for Christians being Patient under all the Troubles of this Life.

Q. Are these proper, whatever the Reason be of their Troubles?

A. Yes, Whether their Troubles be the effect of God's Justice, for the Punishment of Sin; or of his Mercy, for the Trial and Improvement of vertue, or the increase of their Crown; this is the way, for making advantage of them. Wherefore I cannot but disapprove their method, who, upon falling under trouble, and with great
Cu-

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Curiosity or Anxiety enquiring, what may be the Occasion of their misfortune, by this Solitude encrease their Disquiet, and indiscreetly lose the opportunity of making the right use of their Troubles.

Q. What would you have them do?

A. I would have them, upon their first Approach, endeavor to receive them with Patience; because thus they will turn to their good, whatever is the Occasion of them.

Q. And if they endeavor to be Patient, is that enough?

A. This will do very well; but having gain'd this point, they may take one step farther, and endeavor to have Comfort and even to rejoice in their Troubles?

Q. How can this be?

A. S. Paul knew how to do this; *We glory, says he, in tribulation. Rom. 5. 3. As the Sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation also aboundeth by Christ. 2 Cor. 1. 5. I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I Strong. 2 Cor. 12. 10.* Here he mentions all kinds of Troubles, and owns

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owns his Comfort in them.

Q. Upon what motives do you think?

A. In the Accomplishment of God's Will; in communicating with Christ's Passion; in the hopes of that Eternal weight of Glory, which light tribulation worketh in us. And why may not we do so too? We rejoice in our own Will being done. Why not much more in God's? Our whole dependance is in Christ's Passion, and is it not matter of Comfort, to be more nearly associated to it? We rejoice, in Temporal Interest; and why not much more, when we are in the best way of Securing what is eternal?

C H A P. XXXIX.

Of the best method in time of Trouble.

Q. **W**HAT would you advise a Christian, upon the first approach of any Trouble?

A. I would advise him, immediately to retire, and in private to make his application to God.

First, Bowing down, as under the hand of God.

2ly,

2ly, Offering himself, with an entire Surrender of his own Will, of all his Inclinations, and worldly Interests, to the Will and Disposal of God.

3ly, Beseeching almighty God, to direct, and support and Strengthen him by his Grace, that he may entirely comply with his Holy Will, not offend him by Impatience, but make a good use of his Troubles.

4ly, Confessing the Will of God to be Just and Holy, in his present Appointments; and that, as for himself, he is a Sinner, and Suffers nothing, in comparison of what he deserves.

5ly, Casting his whole Care upon God, with an entire Confidence, that he, who has so many ways Signalized his Goodness to the Afflicted, will now manifest his Mercy to him, by supporting him under his Affliction, or delivering him from it.

Lastly, Acknowledging his own Weakness, and again repeating his most earnest Petitions, that God will be his Protector, and enable him to bear the Cross, which is laid upon his Shoulders.

Q. This is very well, but how shall a Person do thus, that is surpris'd with a suddain Affliction?

A.

A. If this could not be done, Why should Christ call upon all, who labor and are heavy-loaden, to come to him, that from him, they may receive refreshment? He that calls them, knows what is best for them, and what they can do, if they will. Affliction puts people in mind, that they want Comfort and Help; and Since God alone is he, who is able and willing both to comfort and help them, it ought not to be ask'd, how they can go to him in Trouble; but rather, how they can be so much their own Enemies, as not to go to him?

Q. I have seen some so overcome with grief, as not to know, what they do, nor to have any concern for whatever belongs to them.

A. It may be so, but can you say, They could do no better? Are you sure, there was no Affectation or Sullenness in this? Nature being struck in a tender part, or rob'd of what is most Dear to it, inclines some Tempers very strongly to this Sullen or despairing Grief. But, whatever the Inclination be, it is certain, a Christian must be sensible of the Unreasonableness and Rebellion of it, and that if he would

would be Resolute, he might follow this Sense of Reason and Faith, and apply himself to God for Remedy, instead of lying down under the burthen.

Q. What is the Unreasonableness of this kind of Grief?

A. It is in the first place, very-prejudicial to health; and if it be indulg'd for any time, it changes the whole Constitution, and insensibly causes such an Habitual Disorder, as is not in the Power of Art to remedy, but will likely be their Exercise and Punishment all their lives.

2^{ly}, This sort of Trouble disables those, that yield to it, and makes them either Careless or Unfit for Whatever Business belongs to them. And is not this an unreasonable method, that Christians, being under a weight, which, they complain, is too heavy for them, should however so manage it, as to add more weight to their Burthen, and encrease their own misery?

3^{ly}, It sets them at a distance from God, and shuts out his Comforts, who is the only Comforter in time of Affliction. For what part can they have in him, who thus, not only shew a dislike of his Orders, but likewise set themselves in opposition against them,
and

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and willfully persist in this Rebellion?

4ly, It unqualifies them for Prayer and other exercises, by which they are to ask help for themselves, and prevail with God to come in to their relief; and, thus by ill management, confirm themselves in misery.

Q. Then I see, you have no Patience with those, who lie under Sullen or affected Grief?

A. These certainly take the wrong way, and are their own greatest Enemies, doing themselves much more injury, than that can possibly do them, which is the Occasion of their Complaint.

Q. What then do you advise them?

A. To take the Contrary way; that is, whatever their Trouble be, I would have them stand resolutely, against this sort of Grief, as being Unreasonable and Sinful; I would have them resist Inclination, and not take that for their Guide, which being Corrupt, Treacherous and Blind, will lead them into irrecoverable Ruin. I would have them labor to keep up their Spirits inwardly, whatever Decency may exact of them outwardly, and as often as they begin to Sink, to be upon the watch, and

and still raise them up, by the help of a Vigorous Faith and Hearty Submission to God. Because in such difficult circumstances they want a good heart, and to let their Spirits then Sink, when they are in greatest need of them, is what, in any other Case, would be esteem'd Folly or Madness.

You see here then, I advise all under Trouble, to keep up as Cheerful a Spirit, as they possibly can; because, by this means, they will be better dispos'd for making their Addresses to God and having a more Firm Hope in him, as likewise for struggling better with the Difficulties of this World: on which Two Points all depends.

To help them in this, it may be proper to admir of some Charitable and Experienc'd Person, by whose Discourse and Direction, the Darkness of Grief may be dissipated, and the Light of Reason and Faith be restor'd; and if Reading in some Choice Book be made a part of their daily Exercise, it may contribute to the more Speedy Recovery of the Mind.

When the Soul is recover'd from the first Surprise, it must be its best Expedient, by a hearty Repentance, to make its peace with God; that so,
the

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the Scourge may be moderated or removed, if it be the Chastisement of Sin; or God's Goodness more powerfully engag'd to its help, if there has been no such Provocation given. >48

But it cannot be approv'd, what too many practise, to drown Cares with Drink, and by sottishness to blunt the sharpness of Grief; for this is not to cure the evil, but by undue Means, to lessen the present Sense of it, and (as Folly generally punishes it self) to add new Tortures to the Rack, as soon as the mind begins to think, and reflect upon the ill method it has taken, in going to *Belzebub*, as if there was not a God, in *Israel*.

Q. The advise you give, is plain; but how few will take care to follow it?

A. All will endeavor to follow it, that are Wise in the management of their Eternal concerns.

Q. How so?

A. Because, if a Christian takes this method, when he is in Trouble, he makes a great advantage of it, even so, as to become very serviceable to Salvation: and if, thro' Passion, Sullenness or Impatience, he forsakes this way, he is so far from gaining, that he is a great loser by all his Afflictions.

And

And is not that a remarkable Indiscretion, to be there a looser by ill management, where he had a fair opportunity of being a Gainer? We call it Folly, if a man parts with a Piece of money at half the value; and we laugh at the Indians, who exchange their Jewels for trifles: and what must that be call'd, when a Christian lets that go for nothing, which might have gone a great way in the Purchase of Heaven? Afflictions are such, if rightly manag'd by a Spirit skill'd in the Gospel; and they are so much worse than nothing, as to set him at a greater distance from it, if they are left to Impatience to put them off. How great reason then have Christians to Study this Point, since meeting with some Difficulties or others, every day of their lives, they would, by this Art, have opportunity of taking every day large steps towards Heaven!

C H A P. XLI.

Of Docility, or being Easy in taking Advice.

Q I Observe there are many and great Difficulties in a Christian

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an life, can you tell me, what may be a good help to overcome them?

A. The Grace of God is the only Help; but since God is pleas'd to make use of Human Means, and likewise to require our Concurrence, I think, among other things, it very much depends upon our being of a Docil Temper, which is easy in being advis'd, takes the Admonitions and even Reproof of Friends in good part, and by a general Sweetness encourages all to be thus Friendly to him.

Q. To whom do's this belong in Particular?

A. I know of no body exempted from it.

In the first place, it is a great Happiness in Children, to be of a Tractable and Docil Temper, by which they will be Easy in receiving the Instructions of their Parents, and be shap'd by their Care, who have the Inspection over them.

2ly, It is a very considerable advantage to Youth, who being willing to hear advice, and shewing a Desire of being inform'd of what is for their good, will by this be deliver'd from many evils, which otherwise cannot fail of attending, [the Resolutions of their

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Rash and Unexperienc'd years, and in all their Undertakings, will proceed with a Conduct far above their age.

3ly, It is very Serviceable in all states of life; because in all there are many Difficulties, which are best manag'd and overcome by Council; there are many Advantages, which may be made, and these are best laid hold of by such, who make use of more Heads, than their own.

Lastly, There are none, even the most Learned, Experienc'd and Wise, but what are Subject to Oversights and Mistakes in what they know; and meet many things, in which others are better Skill'd, and more Quick-sighted than themselves. Now where the Temper is Docil, it not only considers, what help they can have in all affairs, but likewise encourages all Friends, even un-ask'd, to give their Opinion, to Fore-warn, and by Instances of Success and Miscarriages, to inform them, which way to take with most Security.

Q. The Advantages are obvious enough, and I think, so great, that, I question, whether there be any Tempers, who will not make use of them, if not by Inclination, at least by Choice.

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A. There are many, who will not:

There are some so self conceited, that they cannot imagin any to know better than themselves, and hence despise all advice.

There are others, who dispute every thing, that is said to them, and take it as an affront, if there Judgment be question'd. others receive all Advice with a Scornful Smile.

Others cannot be spoke to, but they are presently mov'd, Swell, and discover anger in their looks.

Others run into the other Extreme, and instead of being Angry, fall into dejection, and cry, they are unhappy, who cannot please, nor do any thing well.

Others thro' Jealousy, suspect all Advice, and dare not follow it, for fear of some Design.

Others are so Morose or Reserv'd that either they will not be spoke to, or will not own their Design.

Others are so Proud, that they will not do, what they know is for the best, because it is not their own Thought, and think it beneath them to follow others.

Others are so Stiff and Self-will'd, that they will not be put out of their way, whatever they suffer. O-

Others are over-rul'd by Affection, and will hear none, but those, whom they like, without considering, whether they are Wise or no.

Others are so Govern'd by their Passions or Interest, that they cannot approve of any thing, that do's not favor these, and to oppose them, is argument enough of the wrong.

Others are so Inconstant, that hearing and resolving to follow the best Advice, they presently change their Resolutions, upon hearing the next, that is but of another mind.

Others hear and know the best, but thro' Fear, Perswasion, Ill Company, Vice, Sloth, Love of Ease or Compli-
ance with the World, act contrary to what they know.

Others thro' a Certain Lightness of mind or Vain Humor, have no regard to any thing, but as it is agreeable or disagreeable to this Inclination, and therefore cannot approve Advice, that is not favorable to it.

By these, and many other ways, are Christians hinder'd from receiving the benefit of Friends and their good Advice; and this seldom without their own Fault; it being generally, you see, Some Pride or Passion or ill hu-

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mor, which is the Occasion of their being depriv'd of this good.

Q. But are not they punish'd for their fault?

A. Pride, Moroseness, Passion and Ill humor have generally this Justice accompanying them, that they punish themselves. And, besides many others, this is one general Punishment, that not bearing Advice, they are depriv'd of it, and those Friends, who observe their Indiscretions, Follies and ill ways, look on with Pity and Silence, as thinking it to no purpose to speak to such, who have not Humility enough to be advis'd. And by this means, whatever Friends they have, yet they have not the Benefit of them.

Q. If the Injury they do themselves, be so great, have they not reason, to amend this ill way, which is the Occasion of it?

A. They have great reason ; and therefore I cannot but wish, that such Christians, who observe this in themselves ; that they cannot be advis'd of any fault or justly Reprov'd, but it is generally in some disturbance in them, either of Pride, that swells, or of Anger, that makes them Peevish, or of Melancholy, that dejects ; would take

take pains in overcoming themselves, in suppressing all such inward Motions; and till this be gain'd, to prevent these disturbances appearing in their Words or Looks. For since *Advice* and *Reproof* are the great benefit we can make of Friends; and these are particularly recommended in the Gospel, to such as are over us, as the Proper Means for doing us good; *Be Instant in season, out of Season; Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort.* 2 Tim. 4. 2. They, who do not thus endeavor to govern themselves, cannot fail of being great losers by it, by the discouragements given to those, who, otherwise, would be willing to do them good, both for this world and the next.

Q. Well, but are not some too easy in their Temper, so as to be impos'd on and led out of the way?

A. None can be too easy in receiving just Reproof, or Advice of their Faults, or Counsel from the Wise and Good; for this ought to be receiv'd with Satisfaction and Thanks. And as for others, who are not Good, or have any design of drawing them into a Snare, there are very few so Weak, but they have sense enough to discern or Suspect it at least; and if then they yield,

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this must not be call'd Easiness of Temper, but a Great Weakness of mind, who seeing or suspecting evil before them, will be contented to be led into it. This is almost the Only Case, in which Roughness is commendable in a Christian. At other times he is to be Easy, Affable, Complying and Sweet, and be as a Lamb: but when evil is propos'd, he ought then to put on the Lion, and by an Heroic Anger strike terror in the Proposers.

C H A P. XLI.

Of the Love of Worldly things.

Q. YOU have propos'd many Christian Duties, both as to what is to be follow'd, and what avoided; tell me now, What do you think of the Love of Creatures or of any thing in this world?

A. I think it a very difficult Point in Practice, such as requires great Grace and Discretion in the management of it.

Q. Is then the Love of Creatures lawful in any Case?

A. Yes,

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A. Yes, in many; as between Parents and Children, Husband and Wife &c. Any thing, that is Lawful, Innocent and Good may be lov'd.

Q. Where then is the Difficulty?

A. The same, as in Physic; a due Quantity do's well; but take too much of it, and it do's injury; nay in many cases, is Poyson. The Difficulty then, is in being Moderate, and avoiding Excess.

Q. Is all Excess then in the Love of Creatures, Evil?

A. Yes; but as there are different Degrees of Excess; so there are in the evil of it.

Q. As how?

A. First, if a Person be bent, with an Immoderate love, upon what is Lawful, as it may be in Parents towards their Children; this is so far evil, as to lessen the Concern and Love for God; it takes up the Heart too much, it possesses the mind with too much violence; so that it has not due liberty to think of God, nor to be so Solicitous for Eternity, as it ought to be.

2ly, This Love may arise to another degree; so as to indulge Children in many Indiscreet and Hurtful things, rather than displease them: to con-

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nive at their Faults, their Prodigality, their Vanity &c. To hope all to be well, contrary to what they see; and thus let them go on, till they are out of their reach and Government.

3ly, It may still grow to another degree, so as to favor their Children, in what is evidently Sinful: to do what is Unjust, for making Provision or gaining Preferment for them: to renounce Conscience and Faith, rather than suffer them to be expos'd to want. These and many other evils may be the effects of Immoderate Love; and what the sin of this is, Christ himself has declar'd; *He, that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me. and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* Mat. 10. 37.

Q. I see this; and may the like be in all other Cases?

A. Yes, the same may be in every thing that is lov'd immoderately.

First, it diminishes the Love of God, so that a Christian do's not truly, in such case, love God with all his heart.

2ly, If it prevails on him so far, as to be Careless in his Duty, to venture what is hurtful, to be Bold in the dangers of sin, to take Indiscreet Liberties, to hush Conscience by Particular Opinions,

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nions, to lose Respect, where it is due to cast off Disciplin &c. there is still another degree of evil in it.

3ly. If it go's so far, that a Christian, for the Sake of what he loves, transgresses the Law of God, despises his Precepts, lays aside, regards not, or omits duty, gives Scandal to his Neighbor, neglects his Family, wasts his Estate, ruins his Health, gives ill Example, makes the Enemies of God blaspheme &c. it is evident, here is something lov'd more than God, and consequently, that such an one is not a Disciple, who, in fact, has forsaken God.

Q. And this, you say may be in every thing?

A. Yes, in every thing Created, tho in it self never so Indifferent, Innocent or Lawful. For if it be thus in regard of such Objects, where Love is a Duty and according to the Command of God, as in the Instances already mention'd, of Parents and Children, Husband and Wife; that a Christian may in these arise to that Excess of Love, as to become Guilty of Forsaking God and losing the Character of Christ's Disciple; how much more may this be in other things, where if any Degree of Love be tolerated, yet there is none Com-

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manded? It is certain, in regard of these, the Excess cannot be less Criminal, than of the former.

Q. What may these things be?

A. I have already told you, All things, which are capable of being lov'd by man; As Company, Recreation, Gaming, Divertisement, Entertainments, Eating, Drinking, Dressing, Gain, Money, Ease, Sensual Satisfactions, Revenge, Idleness, Gossiping, Honor, State, Reputation, Party, Friends &c. All these, with many other Particulars, are capable of the Excess mention'd, and may be made the Occasions of departing from the Commandments and from God.

Q. Then these may be lov'd in some degree, tho' not in Excess?

A. Some of them are Evil, as *Revenge* &c. The Rest being appointed or permitted by God, for the Use, Convenience or Help of man, so far they may be approv'd and lov'd, as they are Serviceable to these Ends, which God approves; but if the Love exceeds these Bounds, and Satisfaction is Sought in them, not now with regard to the real Use and Service of man, as God allows, but to gratify Inclination or Sense, to comply with Self-love, Vanity

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ty or the World &c. All this Love is Immoderate, and as far as it becomes the Occasion of Neglecting any Duty, or running into danger of Sin, or transgressing any Commandment of God, so far in proportion, it must be own'd to be Evil and Sinful.

Q. As how in particular?

A. I have already instanc'd Particulars; but for more clearness, I add others.

First, A Christian may love a Friend and Company, as far as they are serviceable, for the profitable or Innocent Entertainment of Seasonable times: but if the Love of these be so great, that for the sake or Satisfaction of them, he neglects his Duty, exposes himself to the dangers of sin or breaks any Commandment, such Love is Immoderate and Sinful.

2ly, A Christian may love any Lawful Divertisement, as far as it is Serviceable for Health, or for the relaxation of the mind; but if it be lov'd so far, that for the sake or Satisfaction of any Divertisement, he neglects his Duty to God or his Family, spends or hazards unreasonably, engages in ill Company, is averse to what is Serious, loves to be Idle, and makes his life but

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a Change or Succession of Idleness, such Love is Immoderate and Sinful.

3ly, A Christian may love Cloths, as they are Serviceable against Cold and shame; but if this Love go's so far that with them he gratifies his own Vanity, complies with an Extravagant World, and for them spends unreasonably such love is Immoderate and Sinful. And thus it is in all other things: and the Reason is; because, tho it be no Fault to make use of any thing Created, as far as it serves for that end for which it is ordain'd or permitted by God; yet to imploy it beyond or contrary to that End, and to the Offence of the Creator, is to pervert the Order of Providence, to abuse Blessings and to turn them ungratefully against the Giver. Great Discretion therefore and good management is necessary in whatever we love; so as not to exceed the bounds, which God has set. He that keeps within these, obeys God; but he, that exceeds them is disobedient.

C H A P. XLII.

Of the Love of Created things.

Q. **W**Hat is the great Perfection of a Christian in this life?

A. The same as in the next; that is, To love God with all his heart.

Q. Can a Christian thus love God, if he loves any thing created?

A. The Love of our Neighbor, such as God requires of us, is an Extension of the Love of God, and therefore very consistent with it. But, as for any other kind of Love of what is Created, it is Injurious to the Perfection of the Love of God, so that a Christian do's not love God with Perfection who loves any thing else besides him.

Q. How do you shew this?

A. From what S. Paul has declar'd of a Married State; in which, tho' mutual love of Man and Wife be a Duty, yet even this Love, thus Com-manded, takes off from the Perfection of the Love of God: *He, that is unmarried, careth for the things, that belong to the Lord, how he may please God:*
but

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but he that is Married, is careful for the things, that belong to the World, how he may please his Wife, and is divided. And the unmarried Woman thinketh on the things of our Lord, that she may be Holy both in Body and in Spirit: but she, that is Married, careth for the things of the World, how she may please her Husband. And then concludes thus; He that gives his Virgin in Marriage, do's well; but he, that gives her not in Marriage, do's better. 1 Cor. 7. 34. 38. Here the Apostle shews, that even this Conjugal Love diminishes the Concern for Heaven, and consequently, that it is Injurious to the Perfection of the Love of God. And hence the same Inconvenience must follow in all other cases.

Q. Then you will allow nothing of this World to be lov'd by those, who desire the Perfection of the Love of God?

A. The nearer a Christian can come to be Indifferent as to all things in this World, the more is the Soul at liberty for seeking and Loving God. For the Faculties of the Soul being Narrow and limited in their operations, they cannot with earnestness be bent on any one thing, but by lessening
ing.

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ing their Application to others. And hence it is, that Worldly Concerns take off the Soul from the Concern of Heaven, by employing the Thoughts and possessing them with a Solitude, which has no relation to Eternity. Whence those Christians have the greatest advantage in order to love God, who are most separated from this World, or who use this World, as if they did not use it, that is, without Concern or Solitude for it. Hence *S. Paul's* Desire is, *I would have you be without Carefulness.* 1 Cor. 7. 32. that the Heart may not be divided, which God demands Entire to himself. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.

Q. If the Love of Creatures be thus Injurious, what do you say of Fondness?

A. Love is a Passion, and what then must I say of Fondness, which is the Passion of a Passion? I say, this is still so much more Injurious, as possessing the Soul with greater violence, more enslaving the Thoughts, encreasing the Solitude of the mind, and subjecting the heart to a Succession of Anxious and perplexing Disquiets, whilst all that pleases or displeases is
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all upon Extremes. All this is Injurious to that Liberty of Spirit and Interior Calm, in which the Soul ought to seek God, besides the variety of other Passions, that are annext to it, and the great Blindness and Indiscretion, that attend it; and therefore is what a Christian has reason to be affraid of.

Q. But if it be the effect of Temper, and a Christian knows not how to prevent or remedy it?

A. He has so much Unhappiness to lament in himself; he has so much more reason to keep a stricter watch upon himself; he has so much to try his Discretion and exercise his Patience.

Q. But what must he do?

A. The same, as with all other Natural Weaknesses; he ought, in Prudence, to remove or moderate it, as much as he can; and what he cannot at present overcome, he must bear with Patience, till Endeavors and Time have made it yield.

Q. Do you mean this of all States?

A. Yes, of all; for where Love is a Duty, yet Fondness is not; but is rather to be esteem'd an Excess, a Weakness, a Passion, and subject to so many
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Inconveniencies, that it must be Wisdom to overcome it, and to suppress the Suggestions of it, till it can be overcome.

Q. But what do you say of it, in regard of other States?

A. I say, it is a Dangerous Passion.

Q. But if nothing be propos'd or thought on, but what is Innocent?

A. How many Evils follow, where nothing was at first thought on, but what was Innocent?

Q. Then you are not for trusting it?

A. As I would do Sparks of Fire among Dry and Combustible matter; they sometimes take fire, and sometimes not, and it is Discretion, not to trust them, but to put them out, as soon as one can. No sort of Passions ought to be trusted; for it is the Nature of them to be Blind and Rash; and who can be Secure, when he is under Such Conduct?

Q. Then, it may be, you will not allow of Friendship?

A. Yes, if there be great Discretion in the Choice; otherwise it may prove the way to Ruin: but, with the best Choice, still the Foolish part of Friendship

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ship is not to be allow'd, which is Passion; for this cannot well be, but with mischiefs attending it, even where they are not propos'd, Fore-seen or apprehended; besides that unavoidable one, of Softning the Soul and bringing it to a Temper unbecoming a Soldier of Christ.

Q. But if a Person finds this Passion Seizing him?

A. He ought to consider, who is capable of giving the best Advice, and there make timely application; for he certainly stands in need of the best, which being to be determin'd by particular Circumstances, cannot here have place; except only in general, and that is

First, that he consider well and take good advice, for that this Passion being Blind, runs Confidently into irrecoverable mischiefs.

2ly, That, if there be no prospect of good, he use all possible Means for suppressing it.

3ly, That he remove from all Occasion of feeding it, by Separation, if it be in his power.

4ly, That, if this cannot be, he industriously avoid all particular Communication,

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munication, and be very watchful in the government of all his Senses.

sly, That he allow no kind of Addresses or Freedoms, which only serve to encrease the Passion.

These are difficult Prescriptions, but being to prevent greater Difficulties, it must be reasonable to Submit to them. When a Tyrant threatens Slavery, it is worth the pains, to labor in dispossessing him, for the Securing of liberty; and he, that do's not, must not afterwards complain of his misfortunes, which he saw coming on, and would not take the pains to prevent them.

C H A P. XLIII.

Of a Clean Heart.

Q. **W**hat do you mean by a Clean Heart?

A. I mean a Heart, that loves nothing, but according to the Order and Will of God: for whatever is beyond this defiles.

Q. How do you shew this?

A. Because God's Will is the Measure and Rule of all Holiness, and therefore, as that cannot be Holy, which is Disagreeable

agreeable to the Divine Will; so if it be lov'd, it must necessarily defile; because it carries the Heart and fixes it on that, which so far departs from the Rule of Holiness and from God.

Q. But what is it, that is chiefly understood to defile the heart and render it Unclean?

A. All Sensual and Carnal Desires: hence S. Peter calls upon all Believers; *I beseech you, as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from Fleshly desires, which war against the Soul.* 1 Pet. 2 11. And S. Paul declares to them, *To be carnally minded, is death: The Carnal man is Enmity against God: If you live after the Flesh, you shall die.* Rom. 8. 6. 7. 13.

Q. What then is the Christian to do?

A. He is always to remember, what the Apostles has told him, *That to be Carnally minded is death*, and his Salvation depending upon his avoiding whatever brings death to the Soul, he is Consequently to be very Careful in avoiding whatever is Carnal or Sensual, and thus fatally wars against the Soul.

First he is to keep a strict Watch upon his Heart, so as to give no admittance to any Sinful Desires, nor to entertain

ertain or please himself with any kind of Thoughts, which are contrary to that Purity, which the Gospel requires, and ought to be abhor'd by those, who hope for the Blessing promis'd to the Clean of heart. To such Thoughts he ought not to open his heart, but start with Fear at the very first approach of them, as at the appearance of Traitors, who have a design against his life, of Monsters, who come to devour him, and of Evil Spirits, who by pleasing Snares, intend to draw him into Hell. And this, not only at Thoughts, which are directly Sinful; but at all others, which have any Relation to them, and attempting him at a greater distance, pretend to be Innocent, that they may destroy more securely and without a suspicion of their design. Where there is not this Care, there cannot be long a Clean heart.

2. He is to keep a like Guard upon all his Outward Senses: his Eyes are to be shut against all Evil Objects, and to be turn'd from all that, which invites to Sin. He ought not to entertain himself with Books, which are either Obscene, or by Amorous Subjects help to soften and effeminate the Soul,

Soul. He ought to shut his Ears against all Sinful Discourse, and not to bear their Company, who thus take upon them to act the Devil's part. He ought to avoid all Public shews, in which such Liberties are taken, as betray a notorious Corruption, where they are Pleasing, and cannot give Satisfaction, but what must be abhor'd by a clean heart.

3. He ought to put a strict watch upon his Tongue, so as never to speak an Immodest or Unseemly Word; for so S. Paul gives the Charge saying, *Let it not be once nam'd amongst you.* Eph. 5. 3. And this is not only to be avoided in *Plain Terms*, but likewise as to all such Words, which bearing a *Double meaning*, may be taken in an Ill sense; for it being from the abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaks, there is a plain Discovery of the Heart not being Clean, where the Lips utter such Expressions, as are so prejudicial to that Purity, which is enjoyn'd the Followers of the Gospel. The same Care must be us'd in avoiding all Immodest Jest or Songs; because all these speak what the Heart is. And if it be Clean, it must have a horror of all such Entertainment:
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it must be confounded, to think, how Christians, who say, they Love and Fear God, can make that their Pastime, which is so very displeasing to him; how they can sport themselves in that, which brings death to their own Souls, and to all theirs, who are pleas'd with Hearing them. For what is this, but Playing with Poyson, and singing one another into hell?

A like Care is to be observ'd, in making Reports or Relating what has happen'd to others, to avoid such Passages and Expressions, as are not agreeable to Christian Modesty; for tho' it be no participation of the Guilt, to relate it; yet such as are frequent in this Matter, and have Satisfaction in it, shew but too evidently, what their Heart is; besides the Mischeif they do, by entertaining others with this Filth and giving Youth (if any happen to be present) an early knowledge of this Subject, which they cannot learn too late.

4. He is to be very strict in taking no liberties with himself or others, which can bear the Construction of this Guilt. I except against nothing, that is really Innocent; and yet this ought not to be a Plea, to justify the attempts,
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in any kind, of a Sensual heart; for whatever is done upon such a Suggestion, will certainly be condemn'd, in the Sight of God, of Sin, however there may be nothing Visible to prove the guilt of it before men. Whence I cannot but admire at what Custom has made too Common, and that is, the great Freedom us'd both in words and Actions, where Sensuality is rather Profess'd than hid. For tho' there be no evil propos'd or intended, yet while it is in compliance with an Interior Corruption, and to gratify a Sensual mind, there can be no Excuse for it, but it must be condemn'd as the Liberty of Unbelievers, such as either know not or despise, the Promises made to the Clean of heart.

And if such Freedoms are to be thus censur'd in the Aggressors, Let those consider, how far they partake in the guilt, who, by Looks, Smiles, Words or other hints of Carriage, give any encouragement to it; all that is so understood, is equal to the Consent of Words; and if the Heart be consenting to it, there needs no other Proof at the Tribunal of Christ. Let those too consider it, who seem to discourage it, and express their Dislike; but do it in such a manner,

manner, that they plainly discover themselves not to be in earnest. What would these do, if any should attempt to take away their Money? What, if their life? In these cases they would omit nothing, that could possibly be a Means of rescuing them from the Violence, and would soon shew themselves to be in earnest. And why not so here, where the Concern is very often greater than of Money or Life?

Here I have told you at length, what the Christian is to do, for standing against the dangers of Natural Corruption, for avoiding all, that can defile, and for preserving a Clean heart. And however the Practice of Christians is such, that one would guess this to be a Matter, wherein God has given no Precept, but left them to the liberty of their own Desires; yet whoever will or has read the New Testament, must observe there all the Sins under this head, to be mark'd out, as the Sins of Unbelievers, even of those, who have no knowledge of God; that they are such, as exclude them from the kingdom of heaven, and from which all the Followers of the Gospel ought to be wash'd and purified; for that the Sight of God, which they believe and hope for, can

be expected only by those, to whom it is promis'd, that is, to the Clean of heart: For *They, that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts.* Gal. 5. 24.

C H A P. XLIV.

Of Self-denial.

Q. IF this be the Rule of a Christian life, as you have hitherto declared, is there not great Self-denial necessary, for coming to the Practice of it?

A. Yes, Self-denial is absolutely necessary?

Q. From what head do's this Necessity of Self-denial arise?

A. From the Corruption of Nature, which spreading it self thro' all the Faculties of our Soul and Body, inclines them all, with a sort of violence, to evil; so that if they have the liberty of following their own bent, they will all run into sin, and seek Satisfaction in it.

Q. How do's this Corruption oblige us to Self-denial?

A. Because the Will and Law of God and

and the Gospel are Holy ; and we cannot walk according to these, except we check and suppress in us all those Inclinations, which carry us out of the way of this Holiness, and lead us to evil. If we follow that which is Just and Good, we must of necessity, stand against and resist, that which bends us to Sin.

Q. Is it thus declar'd in the Gospel ?

A. It is by Christ himself, who thus says to his Disciples ; *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.* Mat. 16.

24. And again ; *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me,* Mar. 8. 34.

Here Self-denial is expressly declar'd a Necessary Condition, for becoming Christ's Disciple.

Q. How is this to be practis'd ?

A. By keeping a strict Watch upon all the Faculties of the Soul, and Senses of the Body ; and bringing them into subjection to the Will of God, as often as any Motions or even Inclinations are perceiv'd in them, contrary to the Divine Will. Hence a Guard is to be set upon the whole Inward and Outward man ; all is to be kept in Go-

vernment; The Understanding, the Will, the Memory, the Heart, the Affections, the Desires, the whole list of Passions, the Eyes, the Ears, the Tongue, the Taſt, the Hands, the Feet &c. No Liberty is to be allow'd to any of them, but according to the Ap- pointments of the Divine Will; all is to be kept within thoſe Bounds, which God has prefixt to them. And thus is a Chriſtian to practice what he pro- feſſes, that is, to be a Follower of Chriſt.

Q. Is not this to make the life of a Chriſtian a very laborious life?

A. Sin has made it ſo, and we have no remedy, but to bear the burthen of it. Since our Nature, being Corrupt, is contrary to the ways of God, it muſt be contradicted by thoſe, who intend to walk in them. There can be no virtue, where this is not done; and if no Vertue, there can be no Salvation; hence all thoſe, who, by a virtuous life, hope to prepare for a life Eternal, are oblig'd to undertake this Task of Self-denial, and thus only can they ſatisfy the Condition of Following Chriſt, and of being where he is.

Q. Can there be any Comfort then in a Chriſtian life?

A. Yes,

A. Yes, the greatest of all Comforts; in doing the Will of God, in the Peace of Conscience, in overcoming and triumphing over sin, and in the hopes of everlasting Happiness with God: these are Comforts, which the World cannot give, and which those cannot understand, who know not what it is to deny themselves, in Obedience to Christ.

Q. But must there not be a perpetual Uneasiness in such a life?

A. There must be Difficulties, where there is a Victory to be gain'd by Fighting. But this is no just reproach to a Christian life; since the Libertin, the Sensual or Worldly Soul cannot avoid meeting far greater difficulties, in the Contradiction of its Inclinations, in the Disappointments of them, in their becoming more violent and more unsatiable, in the infinit Ill consequences of a Sinful life, and the Horror of that Eternity, to which it is hast'ning. If all were summ'd up, which evil Christians suffer, even in this life, who propose the Satisfaction of Following their Inclinations, it would soon appear, that the Difficulties of Virtue are nothing in comparison of them, and that the Self-denials of Sin-

ners (tho' to no purpose) are ten times more than those of the most rigorous Christians. Especially, since whatever these Suffer, while nature is not yet Subdu'd; these Difficulties are insensibly diminish'd, and being once Masters of themselves, there is both Comfort and Ease in resisting the remaining Inclinations of Sin.

Q. Since things stand thus with Christians, what would you advise them to do?

A. The Case is Clear beyond dispute. They are to do, what Christ himself has told them; they are to deny themselves; and this being his Prescription, they may be assur'd, the more they practise it, the greater advantage and Comfort they will find in it.

First, as to whatever is Unlawful or Sinful, the Obligation of Denying themselves, is Absolute; and whoever do's it not, is not the Servant of God, but of Sin. But that they may the more effectually perform this, it must be advisable, in many other occasions to practice Self denials; that so they may have the more absolute Command of their own Will, and like Soldiers, by frequent Exercises, be train'd up to that,

that, upon which their lives and Victory depend: Hence

2ly, As often as they apprehend or can justly suspect danger in following Inclination, it must be Wisdom, if not duty, to deny themselves.

3ly, As often as they suspect their Inclination to be in favor of some Humor, or Weakness or Passion, whatever color of Reason be otherwise pretended, it must be Wisdom to Deny it.

4ly, As often as Inclination leads to Curiosity, Idleness, Vanity, to the Love of the World, to any thing Unprofitable, it must be Wisdom to Deny it.

5ly, Necessity being with Discretion consider'd in all the Particulars of Humane life, it must be advisable to deny Inclination, as often as it leads to any Evident Excess, tho it be not such a degree of Excess, as can be charg'd with Sin.

Lastly, In all things Indifferent, which being in themselves neither Good nor Evil, but yet are in Compliance with Self-Will, or to gratify the Senses, it must be advisable often to deny Inclination.

By the Practice of this method, a Christian will by degrees bring his

whole man into Subjection, and will find it easy to deny himself in things Unlawful, who has been accustom'd to deny himself in things Indifferent or Lawful. He will more easily put on Christ, who has thus learnt to put off himself; he will be in a better disposition, at his last change, to be wholly possess'd of God, who has been learning all his life to dispossess himself of himself, and to do the Will of God and not his own.

Q. But as to others, who follow not this way?

A. They, who walk not in the way of the Gospel, how can they hope to come to the End of the Gospel? Hence all those Christians, who give a liberty to their Inclinations, who consult Nature, who favor, on all Occasions, their Senses and Appetite, who gratify themselves in whatever is most inviting, who follow where the World, Company, Humor or ill Custom calls them, who seek not what is most pleasing to God, but to themselves, who study not how to deny, but how to please themselves, who are not Solicitous to overcome, but to Satisfy their Inclinations; all these are nourishing a Monster within their own breast, are
strengthening

strengthening an Enemy, are encreasing the Difficulties of Salvation, are going on in a way, which neither Christ nor his Gospel shews them; and therefore must be esteem'd unwise, Miserable, Unhappy, till they begin a New Method of Denying themselves, and, as Christ has prescrib'd it, learn to become Christ's Disciples.

C H A P. XLV.

*Of not regarding what the
World says.*

Q. IF a Christian has advanced in the way of Self-denial, may he then go on Undisturb'd in the way of the Gospel?

A. No, not altogether undisturb'd; for if he has no great trouble from within; yet the World will not fail, in giving him disturbance and variety of Discouragements.

Q. How so?

A. Because the World is Contrary to God, and not approving his ways, contrives to lay them under a Scandal, and to make those Uneasy, who endeavor to walk in them.

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Q. What Means do's it make use of for this end?

A. They are not to be number'd; so Fruitful are ill-will, Envy and Malice in their Inventions; but some may be more particularly taken notice of:

1st First, the World lays Virtue under an Ill Name, and represents the ways of the Gospel, as Injurious to Health, as depriving its Followers of all the Comforts and Satisfactions of life, and obliging them to spend their days in Ill humor and Melancholy.

2^{ly}, It arraigns the Professors of the Gospel of Hypocrisy, accusing them of Vanity, Pride and Design in all they do.

3^{ly}, It nicely observes their Failings, and having discover'd any, it publishes them with reproach in triumph, and by pointing at these, endeavors to persuade, that all their Virtues are Counterfeit.

4^{ly}, It spreads Reports of them, and by False Accusations blasts their Reputation.

5^{ly}, It arraigns them of Indiscretion, where a greater Charge would not be Credited.

6^{ly}, It makes them the Subject of Rallery, and exposes them to Ridicule.

7^{ly},

7ly, It busily enquires into all they do, and rashly censures every thing to their disadvantage.

8ly, It employs its Ministers, who may inform them of all, that is said of them.

9ly, It takes occasion, to their face, to flatter, applaud and admire them, as Persons above the common Rank of men, so to provoke them to say or do something Indiscreetly, rashly or presumptuously.

10ly, It paints them out as Bigots, Scrupulous, or unnecessary Undertakers, who will not trust in Infinite Goodness, but in their own works.

Q. And what is a Christian to do amidst this variety of assaults?

A. He ought not to regard whatever is said of this kind, but go on doing his Duty, without any Concern or disturbance.

Q. But how shall he preserve his Interior quiet, amidst all this noise?

A. By the help of his Reason and Faith, and of God's Grace, which he ought daily to ask, for his establishment.

First, he ought to consider, that the World is not to be his Judge, and therefore

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fore having no dependance on it, it ought to be no concern to him, whatever it says.

2ly, He must remember, that the World is at enmity with God; and therefore ought not to wonder, if it shews its malice against those, that are his Servants or desire to be so.

3ly, He must consider the World, as Blind, Inconsiderate, Rash, Impertinent and even Mad, and therefore no more value what it says, than Persons of such Character deserve; and who regards the Reproaches of Fools or Mad-men?

4ly, He must remember, that God alone is to be his Judge, and therefore, that his only Care ought to be, in doing his Will, and walking in his Precepts; and that if he do's this, all that the World can say, can do him no harm.

5ly, He ought to place his Comfort in the Peace of a Good Conscience, and not in the opinion or on the lips of men. Having God for his Witness, who is infinitely Just and Good, what matter, what the World says?

6ly, He ought to remember, how the World dealt with Christ; That it hated him, defam'd him, as a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, as a Blasphemer,

mer, as one, that had a Devil, and wrought wonders by the Power of the Devil, Persecuted him, accus'd him falsely and put him to death, as a Malefactor. And what do's he say to his Followers? *If the World hates you, ye know it hated me, before it hated you: if ye were of the World, the World would Love its own; but because you are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you.*

Jo. 15. 18. And again; *The Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord: It is enough for the Disciple, that he be as his Master; and the Servant, as his Lord: if they have call'd the Master of the house Beelzebub; how much more shall they call them of his household?* Mat. 10. 24. Is not here motive enough to give Courage and Patience under all the Slanders and Provocations of the World?

Lastly, he ought to consider the same Doctrine and the Practice of it in S. Paul: requiring all the Followers of Christ, to approve themselves, — in much Patience, in Afflictions, — by Long suffering, — by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as Deceivers: and yet True. 2 Cor. 6. 4. If this be the Rule, then what ought a Christian

stian to do, but with Patience, interior Quiet, and even with Joy, bear all the Calumnies and Attempts of the World, and go on steadily in the Practice of the Gospel, and in obedience to the Will of God, waiting till God shall call him, who being Witness and Judge of his whole life, will reward him, not according to the Censures of men, but according to Justice and Truth?

Q. Then I see, you would have a Christian not value his Reputation?

A. Let him be but Faithful in his Duties to God and Man, and he need not doubt, but the Good and the Wise will have a true value for him and speak well of him. And as for others, who are not Good or Wise, he ought not to be concern'd, what they say or think of him.

Q. Is not this, to lay aside the Concern for his Good Name?

A. No, it is prescribing the best method for gaining Reputation; which is by Solid Virtue, by Sincerity and Goodness: In this way he may be careful of preserving a Good name, but yet without Solicitude; for if he comes to be so Nice in this point, that he will bear nothing to be said to his disadvantage, but it presently puts him into a
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disturbance, and nothing will satisfy, but enquiring after the Author of such Report; this betrays a Weakness, and by this excessive concern, instead of maintaining his Reputation, he very much lessens it; since whoever observes it, must have a meaner Opinion of him, upon this account. To be mov'd with Passion against Contemptible things, shews a Weakness of Judgment, a want of Discretion and of a Generous mind, and be Solicitous about Trifles, argues the same Infirmities: He then, that has a value for his Reputation, must not shew much Concern at such Reports, which deserve rather to be despis'd; and if this be Discretion, it is Virtue too.

C H A P. XLVI.

*Of Scandal or Offence taken at
what we Say or Do.*

Q. **I**T was concluded in the last Chapter, that a Christian ought not to value, what the world says of him, nor be over-Solicitous in the matter of Reports, in which he is nam'd: I ask now, If another be Scandaliz'd or takes offence at what he has said or done; Whether,

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Whether the Christian; in this Case, ought to be concern'd, and endeavor to remove the Scandal, and so consult his own Good Name?

A. If he has given Scandal by any Sinful Extravagance or Disorder, he is certainly oblig'd, not only to make his peace with God by a Sincere Repentance, but likewise, by a remarkable Exemplarity of life (if not in Words too) to acknowledge the Folly of his past Errors; so to take off the Scandal, he has given, and make the best Reparation he is able, for the Injury he has done to the Cause of Virtue and the Religion he professes, by his former Extravagance. Thus the Apostle prescribes; *As you have yielded your Members to serve Uncleaness and Iniquity, unto Iniquity; so now yield your Members to serve Justice (or Righteousness) unto Sanctification.* Rom. 6. 19. And what is this, but to demand of Repenting Sinners, that they be Solicitous to do as much Service to Righteousness by their good Example, as they have done injury to it, by their Scandals and Wickedness? And tho' there be no allowance for Vanity, yet thus may Christians recover the Reputation they had lost, by letting their
Light

Light so shine before men, that God may be now glorify'd in what they do; as before they were the Occasion of his Holy Name being Blasphem'd.

Q. But what must he do, if Scandal is taken, without just Cause for it?

A. If Persons take Offence, because of Malice or Envy, which is in their hearts, it may be pass'd by, as not deserving to be taken notice of: but if it be occasion'd by a Tender or Weak Conscience, it deserves Compassion, and it must be a part of Charity to remove the offence, by giving them some better light into the thing.

Q. Then you are not for Securing Reputation against Malicious or Envious Tongues?

A. This cannot well be, but by doing ill; since as long as a Christian do's well, they will discharge their venom against him.

Q. Is a Christian to omit the doing a good Action, if he apprehends, that some, thro' a faulty Indisposition of mind, will take offence at it?

A. Christ did not omit healing on the Sabbath, tho he knew the Pharisees would be Scandaliz'd at it. And he often convers'd with Sinners, for doing them

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them good, tho' he was Sensible the Pharisees would hence take Occasion of Scandal.

Q. Then a Christian needs not to be concern'd at such Scandals?

A. Not so, as to omit any Duty or the doing a Charity to such, as want it; but yet he ought to be so concern'd, as to let them see, there is no just reason for being offended at what he has done.

Q. How is he to do this?

A. As Christ did it; who knowing the Scandal to be very Unjust, which the Pharisees had taken, upon his healing on the Sabbath, yet shew'd so much Charity to their Weakness, as by plausible Arguments and such as were most proportion'd to their Indisposition, to let them see, that he had good reason for what he did, and that they had none, for being offended at him. This same method, it must be advisable for a Christian to take, in case of the most Unjust Scandals.

Q. What is the good in doing thus?

A. There is a Manifold good in it:

First, It is doing right to Reason, Justice or Truth, in endeavoring to remove

move such mistakes, as are prejudicial to it. For such Endeavors are always Good; and may sometimes prove so effectual, as to cure the Malignity, or moderate it.

2ly, It is Compassion to the Parties Offended, to endeavor to make them Sensible of their Injustice. And when a Christian shews, that he do's not despise, but has regard to their Judgments or Opinions, so as not willingly to give them offence, it may, very likely, either gain their Favor or make them less Enemies.

3ly, The passing by Unjust Scandals is often the effect of some secret Pride, in the Contempt of others Judgments.

4ly, It is sometimes a want of Charity, when a Christian seeing Neighbors in the wrong, is not concern'd to help them. The more they are Unjust in Judgments, the greater is the Indisposition of their minds, and the greater is their Infirmary, the more worthy they are of Compassion: must it not then be a want of Charity, not to shew them Compassion?

5ly, It is sometimes an effect of Sloth; when a Christian observing others offended at what he do's, will not take
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the pains to inform such persons of
the Motives and Reasonableness of his
Actions; but to save himself this trouble,
leaves them under the Injustice of
their own thoughts.

Hence I think, that altho' malicious
and all kinds of Unjust Scandals, in
themselves, deserve nothing, but to be
despis'd; yet still, in compassion to
those, who take such Scandals, it must
be a good Christian part, to use the
best endeavors, as Circumstances will
allow, for shewing the reasonableness
of whatever is pretended to be the
Occasion of such Scandals.

Q. But what say you of Indifferent
things, if some, not thro' any degree
of Malice, but thro' Weakness only,
are likely to take offence at them?

A. S. Paul has answer'd this, who
gives great Cautions to the Faithful,
not to do any thing, which may be an
offence to the Weak; and to make
them more Careful in this point, he
declares of himself, That if any Bro-
ther should be scandaliz'd at his eating
of Flesh, he would eat no Flesh, as long
as the world stands. *Rom. 8. 13.*

Q. Why do's he lay so great weight
on this?

A. Be-

A. Because he says, this is Sinning against the Brethren, and wounding their Weak Consciences; and whoever do's this, he says, *Sins against Christ.* v. 12.

Q. What is the Practice of this Doctrine of the Apostle?

A. That Christians, in what they do, are not only to be convinc'd within their own Consciences, that the thing is Innocent and Lawful; but, are likewise to enquire, whether it be likely to wound the Consciences of the Weak or Ignorant, in their being Scandaliz'd at it. And if they have reason to apprehend, that such will be scandaliz'd; the Innocence of the thing is not Sufficient Warrant to justify their Proceeding, but they must forbear for their sakes, who are so Weak. This Condescendance, is what Charity demands; and he, who will not deny himself, upon this account, but follow his Inclination, tho' it be only for an Inconsiderable Diversion, without valuing the Scandal, that will be taken, seems to forget the price, Christ has paid for Souls; and thus not having due regard to his Weak Neighbor, he has it not for himself. Say not then, the Thing is Lawful; for this is not enough.

CHAP.

C H A P. XLVII.

*We are not to approve the Scandalous
Actions of others.*

Q. **H**OW are we to behave our
selves or discourse, with re-
gard to the Scandalous Actions, which
others have done?

A. Charity directs us to put the
most favorable Construction on the
Parties concern'd; and Justice obliges
us to disapprove and heartily condemn
the Evil, that is done.

Q. How are we to excuse the Parties
concern'd?

A. As Juries are directed to do,
where there is not an Evidence of the
Charge; *Favendum est Reo*; they must
incline to the most Favorable Construc-
tion. Now since in many Scandalous
evils, there are several Motives, up-
on which they may have been done,
if we have no Evidence of the True
one, it must be Charity, to put the
best construction the Subject will bear.

Q. As how?

A. By laying it to Inconsiderateness,
to mistaken Conscience, to false Zeal,
to want of Fore-sight, to a blind Submis-
sion,

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sion, to Desperate Circumstances, to great Provocations, to the Knavery of Few, imposing upon many, to rash Heats, to Weakness, to Disorder of brain, to things being carry'd beyond design, &c.

Q. And are not all these evil ?

A. The greatest part of them are ; but yet not coming up to that degree of Evil, which is in *Malice* and *Design*, or in *Deliberate-Wickedness*, it is a favorable Construction, to expound Facts thus, and what Charity will plead for, when there is no Evidence of Malice in the Case.

Q. But if there be Evidence of Malice ?

A. Then Justice must take place, and the Fact must be own'd to be what it is. And Charity has then no other part, but to pity those, who were so Wicked, and to beseech God to support all Faithful Souls against such Temptations.

Q. But if the Fact or Wickedness has been done by one of your own Party ?

A. If it has been so ; Can you think it Reasonable for the Apostles to defend the Treachery of *Judas*, because he was one of their Faith and Company ?

pany? No; if the Fact be really evil, it ought not to be defended, whoever have been Actors in it, tho' our best Friends, tho' our Parents or Teachers.

Q. Why so?

A. Because the thing being really Scandalous, it must be a Scandal to defend it; and to approve it in Discourse, is to partake in the guilt.

Q. But will not this be a great blemish and discredit to your Party, to own the Wickedness?

A. It will be a much greater, to undertake to defend it; Since this argues a Profession of Evil Principles, which is far worse than the worst of Facts.

Q. Then ye would have Evil own'd to be Evil, whoever have been the Contrivers or Promoters or Actors in it?

A. I would so; for thus Justice requires, and to do otherwise, is to espouse an Unjust Cause.

Q. Can you your Self do thus, in Cases, where your Church seems concern'd?

A. Yes, I can do it heartily, whoever, or whatever Cause, be concern'd in it.

Q. As

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Q. As in the Case of Massacrees; of the Murther of Princes and others, with variety of Treasons, Rebellions, and such like Contrivances?

A. Yes, in all these I can and do readily own the evil of them; as much as in any other like Barbarities, which have been manag'd by any other People, whether Christians or Heathens. And I cannot apprehend, where should be the difficulty in owning it; having so good Authority for it.

Q. What Authority do you mean?

A. I mean the Authority of Holy Scripture, which declaring, that God had made choice of a Peculiar People, makes no difficulty in owning both the National Crimes of that his chosen People, and likewise the Crimes of such Particular Persons, as he had Signaliz'd among them with Prerogatives above the rest. Are not there the Sins of the Patriarchs, of *Moses*, of *Aaron*, of the *Israelites*, of *Saul*, of *David*, of *Sampson*, of *Solomon*, &c. in particular recorded to all Generations of Believers? Are not the Failings again of the Apostles set down in the New Testament; their want of Understanding, their want of Faith, *Peter's* Denying his Master with repeated Oaths, all Forsak-

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ing him in time of danger, &c. And what
a large list of Disorders and Sins, may
be gather'd out of *S. Pauls* Epistles,
which he owns in the Believers of his
time? Why then should Christians now
have a difficulty in owning the Fail-
ings or Crimes of their Brethren or
Fellow-members, at this or any other
time committed by them? I see no rea-
son for making the Difficulty; and
therefore as I declare my Abhorrence
of the crimes of the *Israelites*, of *Aaron*
and of *David*, tho' I know them to
have been the Chosen People and Ser-
vants of God; so now I do the same,
in deresting all those Barbarities, that
have been since committed by those,
who were in Communion with the True
Church of Christ.

Q. Is not this a Reflection upon the
Church?

A. It is certainly a very great Scan-
dal upon the Members of it: But still
Truth must be own'd; and to deny
this would be a greater Scandal.

Q. But do's not this call the Truth
of the Church into question?

A. The Scripture do's not favor any
such Construction; since it owns the
Israelites to have been still the People
of God, notwithstanding the many
Scan-

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Scandalous Crimes amongst them ; and that tho' the Governors, the Princes, and Priests, and People of the Jewish Church had fal'n under the guilt of the most Crying sins, yet that it was the True Church of God ; and Christ himself commands the Pastors of it to be heard, even at the time while he condemns them of many Sinful Practices. *Mar. 23. 2.*

Q. How is this to be reconcil'd, of Following those, who go out of the way?

A. Christ himself has reconcil'd it in the Chapter now mention'd, where speaking to the Jewish People concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in the Chair of Moses, he gives them this Command ; *All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do ; but do ye not after their works.* Which is in plain terms to tell the People, that tho' the Works of their Pastors were Evil, yet they were still bound to hear their Doctrine and follow it ; and that the Wickedness of their Pastors was not Sufficient warrant for their separating or withdrawing their Obedience from them.

Q. Do's not this seem something Strange ?

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A. It must be own'd, that such Pastors are not edifying, and many Wo's are pronounc'd against them. But still it cannot be strange, what is in all the Institutions of God, which are ordain'd for our Government. We have many such Ordinances, as of Parents, Masters, Magistrates, Governors, &c. Now if these prove very Wicked, as it often happens, and by Scandalous Practices give public offence; yet the Ordinance of God is not, upon this, dissolv'd; we are still to ownour Subjection and to Obey; For Government is not made to depend on the Uncertainty of the Personal Virtue of those in Power; It is settled on more fixt Principles; if it were not, how soon would all Government be lost, and Confusion take its place? If this be true, then it cannot be surprising, to find it so in the Church. The Church of Christ is a Spiritual Government, of Divine Institution; and the Pastors of it, by God's own Ordinance, being Comanded to Teach, and the People to Hear and Believe; this Order is to be observ'd, and has not a dependance on the Personal Virtue of the Pastors. If then any of its Pastors or People do what is Scandalous, they are to an-

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swer for their own Sins; but the Ordinance of God is not made void; but as God commanded, so it must be done; the Pastors of the Church are still to Teach, and the People are still to hear and be taught by them. Thus amidst all Personal Disorders, the Ordinance of God stands good; Government is supported and perpetuated; and Confusion kept out.

C H A P. XLVIII.

Of Entire Confidence in God,

Q. YOU have declar'd many great Duties of a Christian: now I desire to know, whether a Christian of himself is able to Satisfy them?

A. No, he is not; he is Poor, Miserable, Necessitous, and not sufficient of himself, to think a good thought, much less, to accomplish what he thinks.
2 Cor. 3. 5.

Q. Is not this enough to draw a Christian into Despair, to see himself under the Obligation of many great Duties, and wholly incapable of performing them; and yet this to be

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one Condition of his being Eternally happy?

A. It is enough to make him despair of himself, and this is what he ought to do; *For if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.* Gal. 6. 3. But still while a Christian despairs of himself, he may be full of Hope.

Q. In whom is this Hope to be?

A. In God alone.

Q. How is he to build his Hope in God?

A. By the Help of a Firm Faith: for having a firm Faith of God being Infinit in Power, in Goodness, in Mercy, in compassion: and having a like Faith of God's Promises made to man, of helping, strengthening, supporting, enabling, comforting, leading, preserving, defending those, that call upon him; and that God is Faithful to his Promises; upon this Infinit Power and Goodness, thus engag'd to his Assistance, he builds his Hope, having now a Firm Confidence, that, altho' of himself, he can do nothing, yet that, thro' God, he shall be able to do all things: *Our Sufficiency is of God.* 2 Cor. 3. 5.

Q. But how can man, being thro' Sin, an Enemy to God, and, upon this

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account, unworthy of all Mercy, hope to partake of the Divine Goodness?

A. Thro' the Meditation of Christ, who by the Merits of his Sacred Passion blotted out the Hand writing, that was against us. Whence we, who were *Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the World, now are made nigh by the Blood of Christ; for he is our Peace.* Eph. 2. 12. *When we were Enemies, we were reconcil'd to God, by the Death of his Son: much more being reconcil'd, we shall be Saved by his Life.* Rom. 5. 10. Here then is the Perfection of all our hopes; That having Infinit Goodness before us, of which thro' our Sins, we are Unworthy, we are reconcil'd by the blood of Christ, and by the Mediation of his Passion, have Confidence of Obtaining all we want,

Q. Our whole Confidence then is to be in Christ?

A. Yes, it is: so that we can hope to obtain nothing of the Father, but thro' the Merits of his only Son Christ Jesus, Blessed for ever more. Christ then is the *One Mediator between God and men.* 1 Tim. 2. 5. by whom our Peace is made, and we are reconcil'd to God.

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He is our *Advocate with the Father, and the Propitiation for our Sins.* 1 Jo. 2. 1. and it is only thro' the ransom he paid, upon which we can hope for Mercy. He has reason therefore to call all to him, *Come to me, all you that labor*: for certainly those that do not come to him, those that do not seek and ask thro' him, those that do not rest with an entire Confidence in him, can have no part in the Redemption he wrought, and must therefore perish in their sins.

Q. Well, but is our Confidence to be so in Christ, that we may rest entirely in what he has done and suffer'd for us, without doing any thing our selves?

A. No, not in this sense; for Christ himself has recommended many great Duties to us; of Watching and Praying, and striving to enter at the narrow gate; of being Humble and Meek, and Merciful, and Forgiving Injuries, and Loving one another, and being Patient under Reproaches, False Accusations and Persecutions; of Denying our selves, and taking up our Cross and giving an account of our Talents, and of our Stewardship, of giving Alms, of being always prepar'd with
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oyl in our Lamps, of Loving our Enemies, of seeking first the kingdom of God, &c. And is not the whole New Testament full of the like Injunctions? Whence it is very obvious, that Christ did not so suffer for our Redemption, as to exempt us from all Suffering, and to obtain for us the Priviledge of an Idle Unthinking Life. No, he has left us under the Charge of many Duties; so that a Christian life is to be a life of Watchfulness, Sollicitude, of labor and perpetual Fighting; we are to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling: and as for Suffering, you see it is Christ himself calls us to take up our Cross; and *S. Peter* says, *Christ Suffer'd for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his steps.* 1 Pet. 1. 21. Hence you see, we have a great deal to do and to Suffer.

Q. How then are we to rest with Confidence in Christ, if so much remains for us to do and Suffer?

A. Our Confidence is to be thus in Christ; that whatever we do or Suffer, can find no acceptance with God, but thro' Christ; and that it must be thro' him alone we can hope for Grace, for Doing what is our duty, and for Suffering with Patience, as he requires.

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So that both for Grace to do well, and for God to have any regard to what we do, all our Dependance must be in Christ.

Q. But is it not to lessen our dependance on Christ, if we do any thing our selves?

A. Our Dependance on Christ is not Solid and according to the Gospel, if we do not what he requires of us; without this, all our Hope is Phantastic and nothing better than Presumption. It is a like Presumption, if we trust in our own Works and confide in what we do. And then only is our Hope a Christian Hope, when we are Faithful in doing every Duty, and having done all we can, then confide in Christ, that thro' the merits of his Passion, God will have regard to what we do.

Q. Then it is not Forsaking Christ, to give Alms, to pour forth Tears for our sins, to Desire others to Pray for us, to use endeavors for bringing our Body into Subjection to the Spirit and to the Law of God?

A. If we depend on any of these Endeavors, as coming from our selves, and as of themselves being Valuable with God and capable of moving him to Mercy, in so doing we Forsake Christ
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and take off our Dependance from him. But if we use all kind of Endeavors, and, having done all, think our selves Unprofitable Servants; if we believe all we can do, to be nothing, without God's Blessing; and that all we do, is of no value, but thro' Christ; then by such Endeavors, we do not forsake Christ, but express our Dependance on him.

Q. And is it thus, when we desire others to Pray for us; for Since Christ is our Advocate to the Father, is it not injurious to this his Mercy, to ask others, to become our Advocates? And since he says to all, *Come to me*, how can we answer it, to go to any body else, as those do, who ask others to pray for them?

A. The Practice of *S. Paul*, in desiring so many to Pray for him, as he do's in his Epistles, shews it not to be Injurious to the Mediatorship of Christ. We our selves pray, that thro' Christ, we may obtain mercy; this is going to Christ. We desire our Fellow-Members to join in Prayer with us, that thro' Christ, we may obtain mercy; this is a Charity we can perform for one another; and while it only encreases the Number of Petitioners, it is not forsaking Christ,

Christ, nor going to others, but more and more going to him. Thus it is whether we desire this Charity of the Just or unjust, of Saints or Sinners; for it being no more than calling in others to go with us to Christ, it cannot be interpreted, as Going to others, or as not Coming to him; while all our Confidence is in him, and we confess, that we can obtain nothing, but thro' the Meditation of his Passion.

C H A P. XLIX.

Of Serving God in Spirit and Truth.

Q. **H**OW are we to serve God?

A. As he himself requires, that is, *in Spirit and Truth.*

Q. What is it to serve God *in Spirit and Truth*?

A. To serve him *in Spirit*, is to serve him with our Heart, Mind and Understanding; employing them all in the Adoration and Homage we give him, in the Thanks which we render him, and in all the Duties we perform, in Obedience to his Sacred Will.

Q. What is it to serve him *in Truth*?

A. It is to serve him, not according to our own Imagination, Phancy or Private Reason, but according to his own
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holy Ordinance ; for he being Truth, and not we, we cannot Worship him in Truth, if we do not worship him, according to his own appointment.

Q. Is there any other meaning of those words, of *Serving God in Truth*?

A. Yes, to serve God in Truth, signifies, That whatever we perform or profess outwardly, in the service of God, ought to proceed from, and be according to the real Sentiments of our hearts. Hence the Christian is oblig'd to have a strict Union and Communication between the Outward and Inward man, in all things, but more especially in all that belongs to the Worship and Service of God: for if the Lips, Words or Knees are not mov'd by the Heart, there is not Truth in such Worship; that is serving God with a Lie, and not in Truth.

Q. Do's not this Explication exclude many from the Number of God's Servants, who pretend to be his Servants; and likewise, many Exercises from being Religious Acts, which are generally esteem'd as such?

A. It do's so : For certainly, according to this Rule, none of those Christians can be esteem'd the Servants of God, who Professing a Faith in Christ,
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and being Members of his Church, and being present at the Public Worship of God, and performing many other Acts of Religion, are not renewed in the Inward man, but live under the guilt of Wilful sin, and in their hearts follow the Corrupt Inclinations of the Natural man.

Q. Why are not these the Servants of God?

A. Because these do not serve him in Spirit and Truth: they make a Profession of being his Servants and performing some outward Actions; but their Heart is far from him. Now in this there is neither Spirit nor Truth, since the heart gives the lie to all that is done

Q. Is it nothing then to believe in Christ, and to be a Member of his Church?

A. Yes there is very much in this, if the Faith be a living Faith working by Charity: but without this, a True Faith may be of no more advantage, than it is in the Devils, who *believe and tremble* Jam. 2. 19. Here what S. Paul says, *In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new Creature. As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them and Mercy.* Gal. 6. 15.

Q. What do's this prove?

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A. That no external Communion, outward Profession, Action or Ceremony can avail any thing, if a Person do's not become a New Creature in Christ, if he do's not put on Christ, if he be not renew'd in the Spirit of his mind, if he do's not walk according to the Spirit; if he do's not with all his heart love God, keep his Commandments and Sincerely from his heart endeavor to do his Will. *If any man be in Christ, he is a New creature. 2 Cor. 5. 17.* For this only is to serve God in Spirit and Truth. And the same is to be understood of all Acts of Religion or Devotion.

Q. How is it to be understood, as to these?

A. That they are nothing but so much Pageantry, but empty Signs or shadows of Religion, if they do not proceed from a Heart truly possess'd with all those Sentiments, which are outwardly express'd in Words or Actions. Hence, that the Recital or Number of Prayers, the Profession of Repentance, the Bending of the Knees, the observation of Fasts, the Abstaining from Flesh, or any other outward Act of Religion or Ceremony cannot be acceptable to God, except they are
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the effect of the Inward Motion of the Heart, which Seeking, Honoring, or Adoring God, expresses it self in those Outward Actions, and gives life to them. Without this inward life of the Spirit, the Recital of Prayers is no more than the Religion of a Parrot, and a Christian on his knees, is nothing better than a Statue carv'd in that Posture: and the same of all Outward Acts; for if they proceed not from the heart, they are Lies, and cannot therefore be the Service of God in Truth.

Q. Then I see, you confine the whole Service of God to the Heart, and so evacuate all Outward Worship and Religious Ceremonies?

A. I say there is no True Worship or Service of God, which is not from the Heart.

Q. But is outward Worship to be approv'd?

A. If it comes from the heart, it cannot be disapprov'd; since Body and Soul being equally the Creatures of God, and equally depending on him, it must be commendable to worship God with Both, tho' the Outward can be nothing of it self, but as it is the effect of the Inward Affection of the heart.

Q. Do's

Q. Do's the Scripture give Authority to Outward Worship and the use of External Ceremonies?

A. Let us consider the New Testament: In it we find first, many of those, who came to Christ, *Fell down at his Feet* and *worshiped him*: as *Fairus*. Mat. 9. 18. Mar. 5. 22. Luk. 8. 41. And having their Petitions granted, it shews what they did, to have been acceptable to Christ. 2ly, Christ himself describing the Publican at Prayer, and so prevailing with God, as to obtain pardon of his Sins and return home Justify'd, says in particular, that he *Stood afar off*, that *he would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven*, and that *he struck his breast*; here are three External Actions remark'd in his Humiliation to God. Luk. 18. 13. 4ly, Christ teaching his Apostles and Followers to Pray, fram'd for them a Form of Prayer to be said with the lips, which is an External Action. And when in the Garden he himself pray'd to his Father, *he keeled down and prayed*, Luk. 22. 41. or as S. Mark has it, *he Fell on the Ground and Pray'd*. Mar. 14. 35. 5ly, The same is related of the Apostles; *Stephen kneeled down and cried with a loud voice*. Act. 7. 60. Peter kneeled down

down and prayed, and turning him to the Body, said, Tabitha, arise. Act. 9. 40. Paul kneeled down, and prayed with them all. Act. 20. 36.

Again Christ, in raising Lazarus to life, groan'd in himself, lifted up his eyes, pray'd in words, and when he had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, Come forth. Joh. 11. 38. 41. 43. In helping the Deaf and Dumb man, Christ took him aside from the multitude, put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touch'd his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sigh'd, and said unto him, Ephphetha. Mar. 7. 33. The Apostles anointed with oyl many, that were sick, and heald them. Mar. 6. 13. Christ ordain'd Baptism with water: when he sent his Apostles and gave them the full Power belonging to their Charge, he said to them, Peace be unto you,---and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Joh. 20. 21, 22. In the Acts of the Apostles, when Power is given to minister, when the Holy Ghost is to be communicated to the Faithful, when they are sent to Preach, the outward Action is us'd of Laying or the Imposition of hands, they laid their hands upon them. Again the Lord's supper, which is the Memorial

Memorial of Christ's Passion, and the Means of communicating to worthy Receivers the greatest Blessings, is an External Institution, and the outward Action of receiving it, is a Divine Institution. Lastly, the great Sacrifice of our Redemption was likewise an Outward Action.

In these and many other Instances of the New Testament is *Outward Worship*, and many *External Ceremonies* approv'd, which as proceeding from a good heart, or for the *Signification* of them, must be allow'd, from the Practice of Christ and his Apostles. The Heart is certainly the Principal, to which God has regard, and tho' what is External, be not of it self Necessary, yet having the Approbation of Christ and his Apostles, this is enough to recommend them to their Followers.

C H A P. L.

Of avoiding all Superstition.

Q. **W**Hat do you mean by Superstition?

A. I mean a kind of Worship or Vain Observation, Injurious to the worship

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Worship due to God, and to the Dependance we are bound to have on him.

Q. How many kinds of Superstitions are there?

A. Too many to be number'd, but especially Five, to which all others may be reduced.

The First is in Worship, by giving to any Creature whatever, the Honor due to God; as those do, who worship any Idol or Image as God, or as having any Divinity or Power in them, whereby they can hear or help those who make their Address, or thus give honor to them. 2ly, As those do, who acknowledge some supernatural Excellency in things, in which it is not, and accordingly shew a Religious Respect to them, as in false Martyrs and Prophets and Counterfeit Relics.

Q. Is all Honor given to Creatures, Superstitious?

A. No, it is not: We are commanded to honour our Parents and Magistrates; Servants are requir'd to *count their own Masters worthy of all Honour.* 1 Tim. 6. 1. And it is a general Injunction, *Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute; Fear to whom Fear; Honour to whom Honour.* Rom. 13. 7. There is an Honour therefore by God's appointment

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pointment, due to Creatures; but they are not to be honour'd as God, nor with God's Honor.

Q. May a Holy Honor be given to any Creatures?

A. If there be just grounds to believe them Holy, then a Holy Respect or Honor may be given them. So God commanded *Moses*; *Draw not nigh hither; put off thy Shoes from off thy feet, for the Place whereon thou standest, is Holy ground. Exod. 3. 5.* The same Command is given to *Joshua. Josh. 5. 15.* Thus Holy Places, as Churches, may be honor'd, the Bible, Holy Vessels, and Holy men, *Glory, Honor and Peace to every man that worketh good. Rom. 2. 10.* and whatever else has any eminent Relation to God or his Service. All these ought to be honor'd as things belonging to God, but not as God.

Q. How may such Honor be express'd outwardly?

A. There is no Outward Expression of Honor, but is us'd both to God and Creatures: Kings are serv'd on the knees; Petitions are made to them on the knee. We bow to one another, as we do to God: so we pull off our hats; and in Scripture to bow with the face

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to the ground, that is, to prostrate, are us'd not only to God, but also to men; as it is likewise, in a solemn Assembly, where the whole Congregation blessing the Lord God of their Fathers, *bow'd down their heads, and worshiped the Lord and the King.* 1 Chron. 29. 20. Thus in the most Solemn and Religious Worship, God and the King are honor'd with the same outward expression by the Congregation, as the same word is us'd to signify both.

Q. How then are they distinguish'd?

A. You see in these Actions, they are not outwardly distinguish'd, and therefore it must be in the heart; according to the Maxim, *Honor est in honorante.* The Congregation bowing down their heads to God to worship him as their God, it is a Divine Worship, and it must be Idolatry to do so to any Creature: and bowing down their heads to the King, to worship or reverence him, as their King, it is Human Honor, and infinitely inferior to that which was given to God; the Outward Action being the same, the Difference is in the Heart, which is known to God.

Q. Is there any other Superstition Injurious to the Worship of God?

A. There

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A. There is, as to make use of any Words, Writing, Characters, Gestures, Actions, or any kind of Form or Sign, and to expect from them some Effect, which has no Connection with them, either by Natural Power or the Ordinance of God. For such effect being not from Nature or from God, it must be from the Devil, applying Natural Causes, or in virtue of some Compact, tho' unknown to the Parties. Now all this is injurious to the Worship of God, because it is a Dependance upon the Devil, and having Confidence in him, which is a kind of Worship.

Q. Is this Superstition practis'd?

A. It is too much, especially in Cures, when either upon using certain Words or Characters, health is promis'd, or upon doing such things, which have no Connection with the effect. Many of these Practices have been deliver'd from our Heathenish Ancestors, and are mention'd by the Primitive Fathers, above a thousand years ago, as Heathenish Practices, unworthy of Christians, and so carefully to be avoided, that they say, it is our Duty rather to suffer all Extremities of Pain and Sickness, than seek remedy by such unwarrantable means, which can be interpreted

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interpreted no less, than going to the Devil for help.

Q. What other kind of Superstition is there?

A. To make use of Signs and Observations, for knowing or foretelling things to come, or Secrets, which have no dependance, on or Connection with such signs and observations. Many ways there are of this Superstition, as in Consulting Cunning Men, for the discovery of Thieves, Fortune-tellers, Astrologers, Magicians, &c. as likewise in turning the Sive or the Key, with variety of other such Expedients. These Practices have been often condemn'd by Church and Civil Laws, as they are likewise in Scripture. *Deut. 18.*

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Q. What is the Third kind of Superstition?

A. In making vain observations, and certainly expecting an effect, which has no Connection with them. As in using some particular Actions, Ceremonies or Prayers, or Watching on such or such nights. In observing the noise or Flight of birds, Dreams, Days, the Number of Persons, the Falling of Salt, Falling in a Church-yard, with many other trifling Accidents. In
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using Holy things and even Prayers, but with such Ceremonies and Numbers necessarily prescrib'd, as God has never instituted nor declar'd his acceptance of them. Many other ways there are prescrib'd, both for knowledge, Curiosity and Health, with a certain promise of the effect desir'd, tho' without any Connection with them of Nature or Divine Appointment, and must be all rang'd under this head, as Unlawful.

Q. Can the use of these be esteem'd very Sinful?

A. Ignorance, Inadvertency, or want of reflection may lessen much the guilt; but otherwise, they must be esteem'd great Sins, especially if we take the Character of them from S. *Augustin* and other Fathers, who say, that by these sins is made void the Sacrament of Baptism, a Christian becomes Pagan and Sacrilegious, and if not amended by a Sincere Repentance, the Punishment of them must be to burn with the Devils.

Q. What is the Fourth kind of Superstition?

A. To do things by Art-Magic, in which the effect depends on some known or implicit Compact with the devil.

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devil. The Fifth kind is like this, such as is us'd by Witches and Wizards, both mention'd *Deut.* 18. 10. 11. who upon using certain signs, have the Devil concurring with them, for doing some injury to their Neighbors in Goods, Body, or Mind. All these practices are call'd in Scripture the Abominations of the Heathens, and are declar'd an Abomination to God. *ib.*

Q. Are there not many Natural Causes, which have wonderful effects, above all credit, except with those, who have seen the experience of them. And are not the improvements of Arts such, as to unskilful Persons may give the Suspicion of compacts with the Devil?

A. This must be own'd, and therefore in the extraordinary effects of Art or Nature, it is enough to depend upon the information of those, who understand them, and there needs be no jealousy of Superstition. But however these wonderful effects, must not be a Plea for those many Practices and Observations, in which the Case is too Evident, that either they are Useless and Insignificant Trifles, or if they are attended with the propos'd effects, it must be by some unwarrantable means

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means, since neither Art nor Nature can have any concurrence in them. Those who by Education or Custom, are fond of such Practices, are glad to take shelter in any defence. But this will not justify here, where the Prohibition is so severe, and the Plea is a Presumption, which if allow'd as good, will justify the worst of Superstitions. In doubtful things of this Nature, the Safer side is much the best, and to act with a Doubting Conscience, cannot but be injurious to its Peace.

C H A P. LI.

Of Observing Days.

Q *Is it a Superstition to observe days; because this is set down under this Head in the foregoing Chapter?*

A. There is an Observation of days and times, which is certainly Superstitious: as is evident from *Dent. 18. 10.* Where among other things, an *Observer of times* is declar'd an Abomination to the Lord, and one Provocation of the Gentiles, for which they were driven out of their Land. And in the New Testament, the *Galatians* are reproach'd by *S. Paul*, for observ-

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ing Days, and Months, and Times and Years, which in his reckoning, seems so great a crime, that for this he fears all the labor he had bestow'd upon them, to be in vain. *Gal. 4. 10, 11.*

Q. The Case is clear above dispute, that the Observation of Days and Times is here condemn'd as very Criminal; but what kind of Observation is this?

A. What is here condemn'd, is First, the Observation of Days, Months and Times, dedicated by the Heathens to their False Gods, as to *Jupiter, Bacchus, &c.* Secondly, the Difference of Days, Lucky and Unlucky; and these were the Abominations of the Heathens Condemn'd in *Deut. 18.* Lastly, the Feasts of the Jews, to which, tho' abrogated, certain of the Jews, who believ'd, endeavor'd to reduce the *Galatians*, contrary to the Apostles Doctrin. All such Observation of days is forbid in Scripture, and therefore, carefully to be avoided by Christians, as the crime of Heathen or Jew.

Q. What think you of the Observation of Times and Days, in use among many Christians, as of *Christmass, Easter*, and other Holy-days, with *Lent* and other Fasts? Are these forbid in Holy Writ?

A. Such

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A. Such Feasts and Fast are not forbid in *Deut.* since God, who forbids there the *Observers of Times*, do's himself ordain several *Feasts* to be Observ'd in memory of past benefits; some of which, as the Feast of *Passover*, of *Weeks*, and of *Tabernacles*, are enjoyn'd in the foregoing Chapter. c. 16. As in other places he commands likewise Abstinence from certain meats, and particular meats at particular times, as *Exod.* 12. Now what he thus ordains and commands, cannot be the Observation of time, which he condemns.

Again, in the New Testament it is not forbid, since we find there the Apostles, with the Faithful, meeting, on the First of the Sabbath, and the Lord's day (or Sunday) Mention'd by *S. John*, *Rev.* c. 1. Into which the Jewish Sabbath was chang'd. Now if the Apostles had so great regard to Christ's Resurrection, that for this they made an Alteration of the day, which by God's express Command was to be kept Holy, it is evident such an Observation of days is not forbid, but on the Contrary; this Fact of the Apostles implies this Declaration, That it is good, to keep days

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Holy in memory of the Myſteries of our Redemption: and thoſe many Solemn Feſtivals of *Chriſtmass*, *Eaſter*, &c. obſerv'd in the Primitive Church, is proof enough, of this being according to the Senſe of the Apoſtles.

The Nature of the Inſtitution likewiſe pleads for it. For it being not only Good, but a great Duty, to be Grateful and to Give Thanks for the Bleſſings of God; it muſt be good, upon the motive of Gratitude, to appoint days for the particular Remembrance of God's Bleſſings, and to Give Thanks for them. It being likewiſe another Duty to humble our ſelves for our Sins in Faſting and Prayer; it muſt be good to appoint Days for ſuch an Humiliation. And the Practice of all Chriſtian States and Congregations, in Appointing and Keeping days of Public Thankſgiving and Humiliation, upon Occaſions of General concern, which ſeem to demand it, is argument enough to prove, That, in the Common Senſe of all Chriſtians, it is not Forbid, either in the Old Teſtament or New, to Appoint and keep days, by ſetting them apart for ſuch Ends, and that this is not the obſervation of Times

Times and Days condemn'd as Superstitious.

Q. If there be reason to keep such days; in what manner are they to be kept?

A. In such a manner, as may answer the Ends, for which they are appointed; so that God may be glorify'd in them, by the grateful Acknowledgments of his Blessings; the particular Consideration of which, must oblige us to be more Faithful in his Service; and by the Confession of our manifold Transgressions; the sight of which must oblige us to submit to his Justice and be more Solicitous in imploring his Mercy.

There are certainly great Abuses in the keeping of Holy days and Fasts, such as are very provoking to God; as it was among the Jews, upon which account God declar'd, that their oblations and Solemnities were Hateful to him. *Isa. i. 11.* These I plead not for, but declare, that such as have a part in them, are Ignorant of the ways of God, are Prophane in abusing what is Good and Holy, and are Sacrilegious in turning good into evil.

Q. How then are such Days to be kept, and first the Feasts?

Q. 4.

A. In

A. In Spirit and in Truth, and not by outward observance only.

First, The Christian is to consider the Mystery or Mercy of the day: and and having taken time duly to apprehend it,

2ly, He is to offer from his heart a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving: For Thanks being due for Mercy, this is an Act of Justice, and not a Ceremonial observation of the Old Law, and therefore never to be abrogated.

3ly, He is to remember, when he has given Thanks from his heart, that the best Thanksgiving is in Works and Life, and therefore, that he ought to do all the good he can, in his Circumstances, and learn to live to Christ, avoiding all evil, and walking according to the Gospel.

4ly, He ought to Study the way of Salvation, that is, the Gospel and the Life of Christ, and there learn, What is the Spirit of Christ, what, the Rule of his Wisdom; what according to this Rule, is good and what evil; what things we are to desire, seek and labor for; what we are to be jealous of, fear or avoid: and what the Difference is between the Rule of Christ and of the World, between the Gospel and

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and Custom, Common Practice, Human Authority, or Education. This is a Study requires a long and Serious application, and when known, requires often to be renew'd or reviv'd.

Lastly, He ought to give more than usual time to Reading and Prayer, examine into his daily Failings, consider the Occasions of them, see what is to be done for amendment, humble himself, and by a Sincere Repentance, make his Peace with God, resolve upon a New life, and not only in general, but by proposing and undertaking something in particular, that so on days dedicated to God, he may approach nearer to God. And if it be a day of any Holy Servant of God, there is Thanksgiving due upon his account, and very much to be learn'd from his Example, in Patience, Humility, Contempt of the world, &c.

Q. How are Fasts to be kept?

A. As days of Humiliation, for the punishment of Sin.

First, He is to mortify his appetite by observing Rules prescrib'd for this end; and not Study then to gratify, when it is a time to punish.

2ly, He ought to keep an inward Fast, by avoiding all that is Sinful, by

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denying all Corrupt Inclinations, and laboring to overcome himself in all that is not according to the Gospel.

3ly, He ought to seek God in Prayer, and by the Sighs of an Humble and Contrite heart, endeavor to turn away the Anger of God from him.

4ly, He ought to consider himself as an Offender, who is to make atonement for his past Sins and sue for Mercy. Hence like a Criminal owning his Guilt, he ought to decline all, that is Favorable to Appetite, Curiosity, Idleness and Vanity, and not take any liberty, which is not agreeable to the State of an Humble Penitent.

Q. Is any regard to be had to Fry-day?

A. It being the day, on which Christ, Suffer'd for our offences, Decency seems to require something, and Repentance more. 1. The Death of our Redeemer deserves a Weekly acknowledgment; how many do as much for their Friend! 2ly, His Death for Sin, requires a Weekly Humiliation of the Sinner. 3ly, That we should live, as Penitents, separated from all, that delights. 4ly, That we should with Submission receive whatever punishment God sends, us on
that

that day. 5ly. That we shew no Impatience on that day, but Suffer all that happens, in union with Christ on the Cross, and in his Spirit of Humility, Patience and Silence. Lastly, That we seek to have a part in the Redemption Christ wrought for us by more than ordinary diligence in Prayer and Reading, by Repentance, Self-denial, and imbracing all Occasions of Humbling our selves both before God and Man. In this manner, to observe these days, cannot be suspected of Superstition, tho' still in the Abuses of them, as of all other good things, there must be great Sin.

C H A P. LI.

All to the Glory of God.

Q. **H**AVING now gone thro' so many Christian Duties, tell me to what End, is a Christian to refer all he do's?

A. He ought to refer all he do's, to the Glory of God.

Q. Why so?

A. Because God is *Alpha* and *Omega*, he is the Beginning and End; all things began

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began in him, and in him all ought to end. This is his Essential Right, and to deprive him of this, is a Sin of Injustice. *2ly*, Because we are purchas'd by the Blood of Christ, and therefore belonging to him, as his Servants or Slaves are bound to serve him and seek him in all things; this is another Title of Justice, and therefore, not to do it, is to be Unjust.

Q. How do you shew this Right of God and this our Duty to him?

A. Out of S. Paul: *Christ died for all, that they, who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, who died for them, and rose again.* 2 Cor. 5. 15. *Ye are bought with a great price; therefore glorify God in your Body and in your Spirit, which are God's.* 1 Cor. 6. 20. *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose and reviv'd, that he might be Lord both of the Dead and the Living* Rom. 14. 7, 8, 9. Here you see a clear Title, which God has in us, which obliges us to seek and glorify him in all things.

Q. How

Q. How are we to satisfy this Duty in practice?

A. By having a Constant Will of pleasing God and doing his Will in all things. For as all Insensible things glorify their Creator, by keeping in that Order, and serving that End, for which they were created : So if man makes use of his Reason and Faith to know the Will of God, and daily endeavors to do his Will, he, by this Means, answers the End of his Creation, and glorifies God, in observing that Order, in which God had plac'd him, and serving him with that Being, which he had receiv'd from him. The Christian then that thus makes the Will of God the Rule of his life, do's in so doing, glorify God.

Q. Is there any other way for this practice?

A. Yes, there is ; by offering every thing we do in particular, to the Glory of God ; Consecrating every Action to him ; Protesting, that what we do, is not to satisfy Inclination, Interest, or any other human Respect, but because he requires it from us, and our Circumstances, under him, have made it our Duty ; and lastly, humbly beseeching him to accept it from

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from our hands. In this manner, every thing we do, will become a Sacrifice to God, being purify'd from those Selfish-motives of Inclination, Self-love, Passion and the World, with which our Actions are generally defil'd,

Q. This may be in Prayer and other Good works or Offices of Piety: but can the common Actions of human life and business be made such a Sacrifice?

A. Yes, they may: S. Paul in particular directs it, as to eating and drinking: *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God: 1 Cor. 10. 31.* He expresses eating and drinking, which are Actions of Necessity, and then adding these other comprehensive words, *or Whatsoever ye do*, he shews, that all other things, or Actions may be thus offer'd to God. In his advice to Servants, he bids them serve, *not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in Singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward: of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. Col. 3. 22.* Here he declares that the Common works of

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Servants, tho' done for hire, may be offer'd to God, that being so offer'd to God will accept them from their hands, and likewise, that he will give them the recompence of their labors. From which it is very obvious to gather, how all the Actions and Labors of Christians, in the discharge of their lawful employments, may be made a part of this Christian Sacrifice, and so become acceptable to God; as likewise all the Troubles, Difficulties, and Afflictions, which may any ways befall him, in the whole course of his Life.

Q. Is there yet any other way of this Practice?

A. I add no other way, but something to perfect this already mention'd; and that is, To offer up all we do or suffer in this life, in Union with Christ.

Q. How is this to be?

A. You know, nothing can be acceptable to God from us, but thro' Christ. If therefore we desire, our Offerings shall find acceptance with God, we must offer them in Union with what Christ did; that so tho' what we do or Suffer be contemptible in it self, and not worthy of God's acceptance, it may become valuable thro'

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thro' Christ. And this is a way of offering Sacrifice and a Holy Priesthood, which belongs to all the Faithful, to whom S. Peter says, *Ye are a Holy Priesthood, to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God, thro' Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. 2. 5. As therefore all comes from God to us by Jesus Christ; so all ought to return to God by Jesus Christ. The end of whatever Graces or other Talents we receive, is the Glory of God and of Jesus Christ; to this then ought to be directed all our Desires, Purposes and Designs, *That God in all things may be glorified, thro' Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. 4. 11.

Q. And is this enough for Christians to do?

A. It is; but pray remember, what it is: It is, first, To endeavor in all things to do the Will of God, that is, to keep the Commandments and be zealous in every Good work. Then, it is to cut off from whatever is done, all private or human Respects, it is to make God the End of all, to seek his Glory in all, and offer all to him thro' Christ. This is what Christ has taught us, it is what Christ did, who is our Head, and if the Members are thus united to their Head, doing all things in

in Union with him, it cannot be question'd, but thro' Christ they will become acceptable to God.

Q. Can evil Christians do this?

A. Except they are truly converted, they cannot; because these seek generally their own Will, are lead by their Corrupt Inclinations, by their Passions, by evil Customs, by Ill Company, by Interest, by Pride, by Prodigality, by Intemperance, by Sloth, by the World: now these being not according to the Will of God, whatever is done upon such ill Motives, is not capable of being offer'd to God, neither can they pretend to offer it, but their own Conscience must give them the lie. But as for all Sober, and Pious Christians, who are Solicitous to avoid evil, are fearful of offending God and have a true desire of Salvation, their lives and the greatest part of what they do, is capable of being made an offering to God, and it must be very ill management in them, if they omit the doing it.

These then ought to study well the Life of Christ, observe all he did and Suffer'd, That he Pray'd, Fasted, Labor'd, reliev'd the Distress'd, receiv'd Sinners, suffer'd Reproaches, Calumnies, False Accusations, Persecutions, &c.

Now

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Now in all, let them endeavor to joyn with him; when they Pray and adore God, let them joyn their Prayers with his, offer them to God in union with his: so likewise when they Fast, humble or deny themselves, when they labor, help their Neighbor, suffer Contradictions, Reproofs, are in Necessity, Distress, Pain, are accus'd falsely, oppress'd or Persecuted; in all, let them, in Spirit, joyn themselves with Christ their Head, confiding, not in themselves, but thro Jesus Christ, to find acceptance with God. And tho' it cannot be expected, but that *Private Motives* and *Worldly Considerations* will naturally press; yet a Christian may Sanctify all such as are Subordinate to the Will of God, by daily endeavoring to raise his mind to God, and to Correct the Motives of Nature by others, which are Divine. And as for all the other Motives, which are the Effect of Corruption, and therefore Faulty, such as of Immoderate Self-love, Vanity, Interest, Love of the World, Sloth, Love of Ease, Desire of Esteem &c. It must be the Christian's daily business, to be Industrious in purifying his Heart from all such Mean and Corrupt Motives, to be Watchful against

against them, and not to let them steal from God what, upon all the titles of Justice, belongs to him, as his Right. This is a difficult task, but where the Love of God is, there it is undertaken, and carry'd on with great Success, tho' it may be, never truly perfected in this life: This is left to a better State; but here it produces the happy effect of a *Clean Heart*, to which is promis'd the sight of God; and while it disengages the heart from Creatures, and puts it in the best Disposition of making a Sacrifice of all to God, thro' Jesus Christ, it gives a comfortable assurance in God of the Accomplishment of this Promise, that the Sacrifice begun here, shall be consummated in heaven.

An APPENDIX.

For Particular States and Conditions,

HAVING, in other Tracts, given Instructions to Particular States of Christians, I intend not here to enlarge upon this Subject, but, for avoiding Repetitions.

petitions, only to set down the Principal Obligations of each State, under Several Heads, which like an Index something improv'd, may help the Memory of such as desire to be Faithful in their Duties, without giving them the trouble of much reading.

C H A P. I.

Of chosing a State of Life.

Q. WHY need a Christian be concern'd in the Choice of a State of Life?

A. Because it is a businels of great Concern, both in regard of this life, and of that to come?

Q. How is the next life concern'd in it?

A. Because the Circumstances of this life are very different, in being Helps or Hindrances of Salvation. Some are inconsistent with the Gospel, as being Unlawful, others are a great Snare, others a perpetual Distraction, others are attended with variety of Dangers and Impediments; and others again are bless'd with as many degrees

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of good Opportunities for working out their Salvation. As therefore most Persons have a concern in the Choice they are to make, upon the account of their well-being here, so much more ought they to be Solicitous, upon the consideration of their well-being hereafter; and if they be not, they do not in this act as Christians.

Q. What method are Christians to take in the choice of their State, and in Settling themselves for life?

A. Parents ought to make this one part of their Prayers every day, that God would direct both them and their Children in this affair, as he did the Patriarchs. And every one ought to do the same in a most particular manner for themselves, beseeching God to be their Guide and Counsel; that he would please to manifest his Will unto them, and discover by such means, as he shall please, what will be most agreeable to him and their own everlasting Good. This they are oblig'd to do, because all depends upon God; and likewise because, He being essentially the Beginning and End of all things, it must be an Injustice in them, if they take from him this his Right,
and

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and do not make him the Beginning of what they do.

Now God having deputed Parents over their Children, it is a Regular way for Children to consult their Parents, for discovering the Will of God. And as for those, who having Good, Discreet, Pious Parents, do not consult them in this affair, it can be no wonder, if thus forsaking the way of God's Appointment, they become the Authors of their own Misfortunes. But if there be (as sometimes it may be) just reasons for not seeking the Resolution of this affair from Parents; yet since God so often, by the Mouth of *Salomon*, directs Youth to take *Counsel* and follow *Advice*, they cannot hope to have God for their Guide, if they do not seek it his own way; and hence are oblig'd to consider of some Good, Discreet and Faithful Person, to whom they ought to communicate their own Inclinations, with all other Circumstances; and this with all that Truth and Sincerity, as may make them capable of advising them for the best. Proceeding in this manner, they will act as Wise, in regard of this world, and as Good Christians, in regard of the other, and may, with reason, hope
to

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to escape those many Inconveniencies which others draw upon themselves, by their Presumption, Rashness or Indiscretion.

Q. If this be the best method, what particular Cautions are there for Youth, or others concern'd, to observe, for coming nearer to it?

A. First, upon no consideration whatever, to engage in any Unlawful Profession, or to do any thing that is Sinful, for getting a Livelihood.

2ly, Not to undertake any State, that is very dangerous, and which is necessarily attended with very great Temptations, except, upon good advice a person be found to have such a particular call to it, as may give him hopes of particular Grace, to Secure him from ruin.

3ly, To be Jealous of Inclination and violence of Passion; because these are very Blind and Rash, and have betray'd such infinit numbers to misery and ruin, that it must be nothing less than Folly, to take them for Guides and confide in their direction. Better Counsel therefore must be taken, as above.

4ly, Not to let their Choice be determin'd by Interest, Honor, Estate
or

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or any other Humane Consideration or Worldly advantage. For that neither Money or Honor have the Happiness of this world annext to them; there being many Persons far from being Happy, who want neither of these. And as for the next world, how many have lost the Opportunities of being Christians, by being, with too much eagerness, bent upon Estate, Title or Retinue? These so intirely leave out God, that they come at length to lose him; and varieties of misfortunes are the punishment of their Worldly Choice.

5ly. To be very Jealous of those, who undertake to advise, but are not qualify'd for it, as being either Un-experienc'd, indiscreet or Passionate; or in such circumstances, as may bring them under suspicion, of seeking themselves only, and betraying those, whom they advise, for their own gain: There is too much of this in the world, and both Good Nature and Affection are impos'd on for the Success of this Treachery.

6ly, Not to consider the Conveniencies of this World only, but more the advantages for the next. For while Faith regards a Future State, they

they seem to have no Faith, who look not beyond this world, in what they do: and if they prosper accordingly, they must thank themselves.

These, with variety of other such Cautions, ought to be observ'd by such as desire to make a Christian choice of their State. Those, who do it not, so far depart from the Ordinance of God, and take from him his Right of disposing the Universe. A point, which all ought to be affraid of, and more especially here, where his Direction is so necessary. For since most States of life have great Difficulties and Dangers attending them; since most Professions have Knavery and Injustice mixt with their Practice, it must be very Hazardous to choose well, if God do's not Direct the Choice. But the Choice being made, it is the Obligation of every one in particular to satisfy the Duties of their respective States.

C H A P. II.

Of Virgins.

Q. **W**Hat are the Obligations of this State?

A. The Substance of them is set down by S. Paul. *He, that is Unmarried, is Careful for the things, that belong to our Lord, how he may please God. But he, that is married, is Careful for the things, that are of the world, how he may please his Wife: And he is divided. The Unmarried Woman and the Virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be Holy both in body, and in Spirit. But she, that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her Husband. — This I speak for your profit, — that you may attend upon our Lord without Distraction. 1 Cor. 7. 32.*

Q. Of whom do's the Apostle speak?

A. Of such, as Renouncing all Carnal Satisfactions, have chosen Jesus Christ for their Spouse, and thus by the choice of their own Will, have made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven. Of these S. Paul,

Paul, in these words declares the particular Priviledges, and likewise what are the Conditions, End and Obligations of their State.

Q. What are these?

A. The Apostle sets them down in three General Heads:

First, Their great Sollicitude is to be in the things, that belong to God.

2ly, They are to make it their Study, how to please God.

3ly, They are to labor to be Holy both in Body and in Spirit.

From these General Heads may be inferr'd many Particular Obligations:

First, that they are not to chööse this State for avoiding the Inconveniencies of their Family or the World, or upon some Humor, Disgust, Rash or Melancholy Resolution; but upon the consideration of their Eternal State, and for the love of Jesus Christ.

2. That having undertaken this State, they are not to place their Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of themselves.

3. They are not to keep any unnecessary Correspondence with the World: and all Correspondence must be judg'd unnecessary, which distracts

their minds with Worldly Solitude, which lessens their Affections to God and Divides their Heart; all this then ought to be cut off, as far as is possible.

4. They are to admit no Extraordinary or Particular Familiarities, such as possess the Heart with Affections and Solitude; because, if there be nothing farther Reprovable in it, yet it must be confess'd Injurious to the Love due to Jesus Christ, whom they have chosen for their Spouse.

5. They are to turn their whole Thoughts and Heart towards God, and Remember, it is the Business of their lives to seek him, to please him, to do his Holy Will, in all things.

6. This being a State so holy, they cannot comply with the Duties of it, but by a particular assistance of the Divine Grace: hence they are to Solicit the Grace of God with all earnestness, in Fervent Prayer, by a continual Humiliation, by Fasting and Self-denial, and all Exercise of Piety, and the Sacraments.

7. For the same End, they are to keep a strict watch, over all their Senses, over all the Affections, Passions, and Motions of their Souls, and
by

by this care bring all into that Subjection, that now not Natural Temper, Inclination or Self-will may have the command of them, but only the Will of God.

Lastly, as the Possession of God in a future State is their Desire and Hope, and the End of all they propose; so their continual endeavor ought to be, to approach to that State, by uniting their Souls to God, by Love, by Adoration, and Obedience, in the perpetual Approbation of his Will; and by such a Sincere Surrender of themselves, into his hands, that they may become his Kingdom, and he truly reign in them: this is the Life of the Blessed, but cannot be perfected there, except it be begun there. To these Heads may be reduc'd all other Particular Obligations of this State.

Q. But can this be expected from such, as live in the World?

A. Such are under great disadvantages; but however much may be done by those, who are in earnest:

First, They may observe great Moderation in their Diet and Dress, in their Company and Words and Visits; they may observe Retirement, decline

all Public shews and Entertainments, and in their Retreat apply themselves to the Study of the Gospel, and endeavor to regulate their lives by it: having their hours appointed for Prayer, Reading, Rising, Working &c. In this method there cannot be avoided many Self-denials; and many more may be added, for the bringing the Inward man into Subjection; but this with the Advice of some Discreet and Experienced person.

Q. The World will scarce allow of all this.

A. I do not see, that the World courts those, who do not court it. Those, who make but few Visits, will not be disturb'd with many. But for this, if persons do as much as they can in their Circumstances, the rest must be dispens'd with.

Q. But will not this be remarkably Singular?

A. If Singularity be the effect of Pride, it is not to be countenanc'd; but otherwise it must be encourag'd: for where almost all go out of the way and forsake the Gospel, this general Corruption obliges those to be Singular, who will follow it.

C H A P. III.

Of Marry'd Persons.

Q. **W**HAT is the First Obligation of Marry'd Persons?

A. The First is to God; to Love him above all things, to serve him and keep his Commandments: hence, amidst all the Distractions, Solitude and Business of their State, yet still the Kingdom of God is to be sought before all things, and whoever lays by this concern, or upon the Consideration of Family, or in Compliance with Affection or Interest, transgresses any Command of God, and lives on in such Offence, such an one loves Husband or Wife or Children more than Christ, and therefore cannot be his Disciple.

Q. What other obligations have they?

A. They have obligations to one another; and these are many.

First, they are to love one another, as one body and one flesh, even as Christ loves his Church.

2. They are to do all things, as are necessary for maintaining this love.

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They are to be Meek and Moderate to each other; bear with one anothers Infirmities, have great Compassion, and an untir'd Patience.

3. They are to avoid Contention and Unkind Disputes; Quarreling ought not to be admitted in this strict Alliance.

4. Hence they ought not to give Provocation to each other, but having now a knowledge of one anothers Tempers and Weakness, are to use great, and even an universal Compliance, for preventing Misunderstandings, or rather than give a jealousy of any Unkindness.

5. If one be disturb'd, it is then the others part to Study and take all the ways of Sweetness, Tenderness and Moderation, so to prevent Disorder, and for bringing all again into a calm.

6. In time of such disturbance, it is not then Seasonable for the other, to shew the Unreasonableness of the Passion, or make any kind of Remonstrance or Plea, upon any pretext, however Just and Reasonable it may appear. This ought to be adjourn'd to some calmer Season, when a Person is better dispos'd to hear Reason and follow it; for Passion is certainly a hindrance to both.

7. Hence

7. Hence a great care is to be us'd, in avoiding all words, that may displease; nothing is to be said or done with a design to provoke: Prudence is to govern the Tongue, and Moderation to temper the Mind.

8. All approaches of Indifferency are to be banish'd from the Mind; and the least Symptoms of Dislike, Ill-will and Aversion are to be dreaded, as a Monster or the worst of Poyson.

9. If any Difference happens, no Complaints ought to be made of it to any Friend; for such Indiscretion often makes a breach Incurable. No Thwartings or Contradictions ought to be us'd at any time, much less in public, for such Indiscreet liberties of the Tongue create great Uneasiness and prepare the way for Dislikes.

These with other like Rules ought to be strictly observ'd, for the Support of that Love and Peace, which are Particular to this State. Peace and Charity are the Obligation of all Christians to one another, even in regard of Enemies: how much more here, where the Bond of Unity is so much Stricter, and Peace so Absolutely necessary, that they can hope for no Comfort, if Peace be not maintain'd?

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All then ought to be given for Peace; this Purchase cannot be too Dear, where there is any likelihood of preserving it. A great Deal may certainly be done towards it, where Tempers are so well known, as they must be here. There is a way of dealing with all Tempers; this point must be Study'd; and when the way is discover'd; nothing of Humor or Difficulty is to dissuade from that, which is likely to contribute so much to Peace. There may be occasion, in the Practice, for great Self-denial, Humility and Compliance, but still Peace is worth it all. It is better to yield, than to live in Contention; and if Discretion were always ready, I do not question, it would manage Compliance so, as to keep Peace even with the most Difficult Tempers; and therefore where it is not kept, I must lay it generally to the want of good management, which is but another name for Indiscretion. Let the Case be try'd, Upon what Trifling Occasions are rais'd Differences, and this alone will justify, in a great part what I say. For the better Establishment of Peace, it must be remember'd?

*First, That the Husband is the Head
of*

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of the Wife, even as Christ is Head of the Church: therefore as the Church is Subject unto Christ, So let Wives be to their own Husbands in every thing. This is the Ordinance and Command of God Eph. 5. 23. 24.

2ly, That men ought to love their Wives, as their own Bodies: He that loveth his Wife loveth himself: for no man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. This likewise is the Ordinance and Command of God. Eph. 5. 28. 29.

Hence, First, Wives ought to Submit to their Husbands, as to their Head: ought to observe their Ways and Will, and in all Lawful and Reasonable things comply with them. They are not to dispose of or Spend, but with the Consent, express'd or presum'd, of him, in whom the Power is lodg'd, according to the Ordinance of God,

2. Husbands are to remember the Love due to their Wives, and that they are neither their Slaves or Servants, but as their own Bodies, Parts of themselves; and to be nourish'd, cherish'd and taken care of, as such. Hence they are to be provided with all Necessaries, and likewise with

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with such reasonable Conveniencies, as may be for the Comfort of life. And to be wanting in this Care is Unnatural and Inhuman in it self, and an absolute, transgression of God's Command. These Hints may be enough for all, who are willing to be directed; but if any thing extraordinary happens, they are to be consulted, whose office it is to Direct.

I add nothing of the Conjugal Debt, but say with S. Paul, *that every one should know to possess his Vessel in Sanctification and Honour; not in the Lust of Concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, who know not God.* 1. Theff. 4. 4. What is permitted, is Lawful; but the Christian is to be careful, that, under this Colour, he do not take Liberties, which are Unlawful. He ought to be mindful too of the same Apostle's Advice, in Oblerving some Temperance, *by Consent for a time, that that they may give themselves to Fasting and Prayer.* 1 Cor. 7. 5. It is good then and an acceptable Self-denial, which has Regard to Days of Solemn Fasts or Devotion.

C H A P. IV.

Of Parents.

Q. **W**Hat are the Obligations of Parents to their Children ?

A. They are many ; some of these begin, even before the Children are born.

First, it is the Mothers care to prevent Miscarriages, and untimely Births ; because in these the Life of Children is concern'd, and at least their Health. The Point is so considerable, that, if such Unhappy accident be occasion'd by the Mother's fault, it cannot be excus'd from the guilt of Sin, and may be very criminal.

2. It is the Father's care, not to give any Occasion to such Unnatural Accident, either by his Passion or other Ill usage : for if by such, or other like ways, he be the faulty Occasion of it, his Sin is no less than Murther, even the Unnatural Murther of his own.

3. It must be the care of both, that their Child be Baptis'd ; and that
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this be not differr'd, upon any Compliment to Gossips, or for any Ceremony or Entertainment.

4. It is the Order of Nature, that the Mother should be Nurse to her own Child, and to omit this without Necessity, is to transgress the Ordinance of God.

5. If a Stranger must be call'd to supply this Office of a Mother, it ought to be done, under the Mother's eye, and with great choice of the Person. For that a *Stranger* and at a *Distance*, are two Circumstances, which are likely to come very short of a Mother's Care; and this is so considerable, that the Constitution, Health and even life of the Child are concern'd in it; and therefore ought to be the Parents concern, lest they concur to the Murther of their own.

6. It must be the Care of both, that for the first year, the Child be not laid in bed with Mother, Nurse or Servant, because of the danger of being over-laid. The Yearly and even Weekly Bills of London shew what this danger is, in the number of Infants Murther'd this way.

7. As Children become Sensible,
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it must be the Mother's care to keep an awe upon them, and give them early Impressions of Subjection, so to prevent any kind of Ill humors then to take root and strengthen in them.

8. As they advance in Years it must be the care of both Parents, to see them duly educated for a Christian life: They must be taught to Read, and instructed in the Christian Doctrin. To neglect either of these, is the neglect of their Souls, and Unchristian.

9. A careful Watch is to be kept, for preventing the growth of any Ill Humour, of Stubborness, Violence, Self-will, Fretfulness, Anger, &c.

10. Vanity is to be discourag'd, as they grow up, as likewise all Niceness in Diet, Cloth, Idleness &c.

11. That this may be done well, Parents are to mix their Natural Love towards their Children, with Reason and Religion, so to suppress all immoderate Fondness; for this being a Passion stark blind, is very unfit for that business, which requires many eyes. This seldom sees Faults in Children, alwayes finds Excuses for them, sometimes makes them to be Virtues, and never thinks Punishment seasonable;
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and therefore, as nothing can be more injurious to good Education, so it is what Parents ought to dread, as an Industrious evil, which treacherously makes them the Ruin of their Children, while they think of nothing, but doing them good.

12. As Fondness is an evil, so is likewise the other Extreme, of Harshness, Ill-nature and Cruelty. There is a Tenderness and Compassion due to Children : and as their Heedlessness and Corrupt nature makes Correction and Reproof necessary ; so there is a necessity of great Moderation, that so Children may not come to have a dislike to their Parents, and love any Company more than theirs. Correction then must be given, but Passion ought not to manage the Rod.

13. When riper years fit them for higher Education, Parents ought to take care of it ; being always mindful not to hazard their Souls, for giving an air to their Children and making them Modish. The knowledge of Jesus Christ and of his Gospel, ought to be their Principal care, and nothing allow'd, which is not consistent with this. Dangerous Entertainments, Idle Company and Books are to be forbid.

Vanity and Idleness are to be discourag'd; and Youth of all Degrees are to be taught to employ their time and love business.

14 Provision is to be made for them, and care taken for their being dispos'd of. The Consideration of Honor, or Money, or any worldly Convenience, ought not to direct Parents in their Choice; Heaven ought to be more consider'd, than Earth in this affair. And as for such, as seem Forward, the Care of Parents ought to be Early, to prevent their making themselves miserable by their own Indiscretion.

15. Poverty, Want of Conveniencies suitable to Education, are great Temptations; Parents then are bound to provide, by their best Industry, that their Children be not left thus expos'd. And nothing can be more Inhuman, than for Parents, out of an immoderate Indulgence of their own vain Humor, Prodigal Passion or Vice, to bequeath to their Children a lasting Misery, even such as may not end with this World. How many Parents have thus brought their Children into so many misfortunes, that it would have been less Cruelty to have cut their throats?

Thus

Thus are the Duties of Parents multiply'd : and when all is done, the dangers of Miscarriage in Youth are so many, that a Parent can never be without fear. This one thing then ought to be their general care, so to discharge their Duty to their Children, by Watchfulness, Instruction and good Example, that if afterwards these take ill ways, their Parents may have this Satisfaction at least, that nothing has been occasion'd thro' their Neglect.

C H A P. V.

Of Children to Parents.

Q. **W**Hat are the obligations of Children to their Parents ?

A. There are Three Principal ones :

1. To love them.
 2. To Honor them.
 3. To obey them.
- All these have their Several branches.

First Children are to desire no evil to their Parents.

2. They are to Desire and to do them all good.

3. They are, to defend them, according to the best of their abilities, from all injuries.

4. They

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4. They are to avoid all reproachful words.
5. They are to express no signs of Contempt.
6. They are to do nothing willingly to grieve or vex them.
7. They are to harken to their Advice, obey their Commands in what is lawful, and express no disrespectful dislike of their Orders.

So far the Word of God lays a strict Injunction upon Children in relation to their Parents, and adds very Severe Threats, to shew the greatness of their guilt, who offend in this point, and what punishment they may expect, if not prevented by a timely Repentance,

Q. If this be the Duty of Children, what is the First thing you recommend to them?

A. That from the time, when they first begin to have a sense of their Duty, they accustom themselves to shew Respect to their Parents, not only in Words and Actions, but more particularly, in a Cheerful and ready compliance with their Directions and Orders; for this is what God has Commanded, and they can no otherwise

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therwise hope for his Blessing, than by observing this his Command.

As Children grow up, so this Principle ought to make greater Impressions in them; so that what before was Custom, now ought to be done upon a Principle of Conscience. They ought to have it ever before their eyes; that their Parents are put over them by the express Order of God; that they have God's Commission for what they do; that God speaks to them by their Parents, whose Deputies they are: and hence, that as their Deference and Respect to them ought to be very great, so they ought to be afraid of Offending, Displeasing, Neglecting, or Disobeying them. In this manner their Conscience ought to be fram'd, as God's Word Directs them.

If thro' heedlessness or Ill humor they have disobey'd or displeas'd their Parents, they ought, upon the first intimation of it, to humble themselves, beg pardon, promise amendment and so endeavor to make their Peace; and, above all things, to be afraid of Stubbornness, as of the worst of evils; as an evil, against which God has declar'd his great displeasure, and puts men in
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the danger of becoming like Devils who being once in the wrong, will ever be so and can never change.

As they ought not to be Stubborn, so they are to shew no ill Humor, not, to grumble or Swell, at any Reproof or Order of their Parents; but, whatever their Inclination be, so compose themselves, as to appear always Easy in the practice of their Obedience and love. And if this be their duty, as it certainly is, then how strict ought to be their care, in never mocking, or expressing any Contempt of their Parents, either, in Words, or any Signs or Actions? for this cannot be done, but with the great offence of God, such as puts them in danger of not having him for their Father in Heaven; and how Unhappy then must Children be, who lose his protection!

When now they are come to riper years, and have a better Sense of Reason and Religion, their Care must be greater, and there Observation Stricter; so as to give evidence of the Love, and True Respect, which they have for their Parents.

To give Demonstration, of this Love and Respect, they ought. First, both in

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in Words, Actions, and Attendance, Express a Tenderneſs for them.

2. They ought to ſhew a Deſire to Pleaſe them, and a real Trouble, as often as they ſee them diſpleas'd at any thing they have done.

3. They ought not to hold any Diſpute with them, but chooſe to yeild, even when they think them miſtaken.

4. They are to aſk their Parents advice, in what they do; and even, where there is no Leave neceſſary, take ſome occaſion of letting them know, what they have done, or propoſe to do.

5. They are to conſult with them, in the choice of their Company, of their Divertiſements, Viſits and Employments; and do nothing in any of theſe, which they know, will be a grief to their Parents; and the ſame is to be obſerv'd as to their Expences.

6. They are to communicate their Inclinations to them, in relation to the Choice of a State of life: and in the great affair for life, of chooſing a Wife or Husband, ought to do nothing, but with their Approbation and Conſent.

7. If their Parents have any Natural Weakness, or are Subject to any ill Custom, they are not to presume to reprove them in public, nor to reproach them behind their Backs. If their Temper be such, as to allow of any Meek and Submissive Remonstrance, they may make trial, but with all Respect. If any Friend has Sufficient Interest with them, Advice is to be taken, whether it be proper to engage such an one, to try what he can do. But what cannot be remedy'd by due Means, it must be Duty to bear with Patience, and even for Children to do their duty, when Parents are so unhappy, as not to do theirs.

These are some Principal and General Points; and if Children would but consider, what is due to Parents, for the Variety of Care and Solitude in their Education; and how strict is the Obligation God has laid upon them; they would certainly see it their Interest to comply with them, and that they cannot pass for Christians, who seem to be little concern'd in this point.

C H A P. VI.

Of Widows.

Q. **W**Hat is the Obligation of Widows? Are they bound to abide in that State?

A. They have no such Obligation; if they judge it reasonable to marry again, there is no Law, that forbids them. But they have *S. Paul's* Advice, that tho' they are at liberty to marry, yet they are happier, if they abide so as they are. *1 Cor. 7. 40.* and the same he repeats in several other places. So that, if Widows will take this Apostle's Advice, the best thing they can do, (such as have a due knowledge of themselves) is to consecrate their Widowhood to God, and make a Promise to him of never changing their State. This is the best they can do for the next World; and, if they observe the unhappy Indiscretion of so many, who by Second Engagements make themselves Miserable even in this life, I think they must Judge that to be Wisdom of this World, which may be a good Means of Establishing

Establishing them against such Temptations.

Q. If they do not Marry, what Directions are they to observe?

A. Such as the same Apostle has given them. 1 Tim. 5. 3.

First, If they have Children &c. they are to take care to give them good Education and breed them up in the fear of God.

2. They are carefully to provide for their Family; for to Neglect this is like the Sin of Infidelity.

3. They are to take care to be Blameless; that is, to be so Discreet, both within their Family, in their Conversation, Visits, Entertainments, Correspondence and in all Public places, as to give no just occasion to the world to reprehend their Conduct.

4. They are to employ their time, and not to be Idle, not wander up and down from house to house, not be Tattlers, nor Busy-bodies, nor speak things, which they ought not.

5. They are to be Desolate as to this world, as Persons, who have had their present Comfort Snatch'd from them. Hence having experienc'd the uncertainty of this World, they are to raise their hearts towards God, and

seek comfort, and trust in him.

6. Hence they are *to continue in Supplications and prayers, night and day*; in which words the Apostle shews, how much they ought to seek God, and make Heaven much more their business, than earth.

These Directions are given by the Apostle to Widows, who resolve upon following his Advice and abiding as they are. And from these, it is plain:

First, that he expects such Widows should in the first place endeavor to make God their Portion; that having formerly their Hearts divided, now they should entirely give their hearts to God, and turn all that Solitude to him, which before had been employ'd in pleasing their Husband.

2. That by Assiduity and fervor in Prayer and Watching, they should make atonement for all their past Excesses and Liberties.

3. That having been a part of the World, and joyn'd with it, in its immoderate Solitude, in its Vanities, Prodigalities and Idleness; having had a share in raising the esteem of its frothy and perishable Goods; now, upon finding, how deceitful it is, they should, by their Example, endeavor to imprint

Ideas

Ideas in all that know them; That the World is False and Vain, and that the only solid Comfort of a Christian, is in following the Rules of the Gospel, and making provision for Eternity.

4. That hence they endeavor to re-trench all Superfluities; and having consider'd what *Necessary* demands and a *Moderate Decency*, they make it their Rule, to keep within these bounds: avoiding *Vanity* in their Dress, *Ostentation* in their Table, Furniture and Attendance, *Prodigality* in their Expenses; and declining all those Meetings and Shews, which are design'd for nothing, but to maintain Folly and Idleness.

5. That by this method they endeavor to make Satisfaction for their Former ill Example.

6. That while they renounce the Vanity and Prodigality of the World, they be watchful against all degrees of Covetousness: for that to turn from Vanity to the Love of Money, is not Amendment, but only a Change of Evils; and who can tell, which is the more dangerous?

7. That they be Cautious in their Conversation, restrain all the undue

liberties of the Tongue, and be careful, not to give any offence.

8. That they love Retirement, avoid Unnecessary Visits, change these for some more to the purpose, in carrying Comfort to the Distress'd, the Sick, the Comfortless, the Widow &c. and being ready to attend to all works of Charity.

This seems to be, what S. Paul expects from his Widows, and it is what we find to have been the method of those Widows commended in Scripture, *Judith* and *Anna*. It is the method, of such, as are to be esteem'd *Widows indeed*, whom the Apostle commands *Timothy* to honor : *Honor*, says he, *Widows, that are Widows indeed.* 1 Tim. 5. 3. But, as for others, who make it their daily endeavor, to supply the loss of their Husband, by seeking to gratify themselves, in all that pleases, and following now the bent either of a Vain, Prodigal or other Worldly, Light or Corrupt humor, without control, S. Paul has given the Character of such, in these few words ; *She, that liveth in pleasure (or delicately) is dead, while she liveth.* 1 Tim. 5. 6.

C H A P. VII.

Of Masters and Mistresses.

Q. **W**Hat is the Obligation of Masters and Mistresses?

A. They have several; but reduc'd under two Principal Heads, with relation to their Estate or Employment, and to their Family or Servants.

Q. What is the First, relating to their Estate or Employment?

A. It is, That they ought to be Faithful in their Charge, whatever it be, If they have an Estate, they are bound to be Industrious in the management of it. If they have a Profession or Trade; they are oblig'd to use all care, that it be a present support and future Provision.

Q. Why is this their obligation?

A. Because it is a Duty of Justice. He, that has an Estate, is strictly bound, both to God and his Family, to manage it well.

Q. Is not he Proprietor and Master of his Estate; and may he not then do with it, as he will?

A. He is so, in the phrase of Humane Laws; but according to the

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Law of God, he is no more than Steward. Hence tho' human Constitutions leave him to his liberty, and whatever his Extravagance or Madnes may be, such may be his Title, that these will call him to no account: Yet it is not so, with respect to God, for, by his Laws, he is under a manifold Restraint; and if he observes not the Conditions, with which God has put the Trust into his hands, as to all he possesses, he will be call'd to a severe account, and must make Satisfaction for whatever Wast can be prov'd against him. The Summons, of *Redde rationem Vilicationis tue. Give an account of thy Stewardship*, will certainly one day be sent to him. This then is a duty of Justice in respect to God.

There is another in respect to his Family, which presses the same Duty, as an Obligation of Justice. For by the Law of Nature Parents are bound to take care of their Children, and to make Provision for them; and it must be an evident Transgression of this Law, if Parents, by their want of Care or by any Extravagance, become disabled, that they cannot now dispose of them, as their Circumstances may re-

quire, *quod deus vult*; but according to the Law

quire, but leave them to the dismal Uncertainty of Friends or Fortune.

This same Duty presses upon Persons of all Degrees; hence whoever they be, that make their Family Unhappy, by their want of Care, by Sloth, by Love of Company, by Intemperance, by Entertainments, by Vanity or any other ill way, it is certain they are Unjust, in being Faithless or Careless in their Trust, and must answer for the many Ill Consequences of their Unhappiness, who are made Unhappy thro' their Fault.

Q. This seems to touch only the Masters of Families.

A. It principally and generally concerns them; but sometimes the other Sex too has its Share in the guilt of this Injustice.

First, by having a share in such extravagant Expences, as eat out an Estate.

2ly, By working upon Good Nature, to comply with their Unreasonable Desires; for some, are so Weak, as to purchase Peace at home, at any rate.

3ly, By being of so Uneasy a Temper, and so careless in governing it, that a man finding no Comfort at home, seeks for it abroad; and by these

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Steps unhappily runs into all Extravagance, even to the ruin of his Family. Now tho' such Provocation cannot justify what he do's; yet it is the part of Discretion, to provide against such ill Consequences and take away the Occasions of them. There is Difficulty in overcoming Nature; but that person must be obstinately Mad, who will rather see all ruin'd, than not have their own humor, or be worsted in what they pretend.

4. By being so wholly taken up in gratifying their own Inclinations and following their Entertainments or Diversions, as seldom to be at home, and to neglect the whole concern of their Family, which in justice belongs to their care.

5. By being so Slothful, as to sleep away that time, which should be employ'd in their Family-concerns; and at other times, to let every body do, as they please, rather than stir, to see what is done.

6. By indulging melancholy or splematic humors, so far, that they seem to be without life or Spirit, and wholly unfit for business; and as for whatever life is left, it is so taken up with their own wants, that they have nothing left

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to think of their Family: and so all is left to Trust or Ill management.

7. By observing no Order or Discipline; by taking no accounts; by not enquiring, how every one manages their Trust; by giving unreasonable Liberties; by giving no Reproofs where due; by not reforming Disorders.

By these, and many other ways of Vice or Neglect, both Masters and Mistresses may be wanting in their duty, and offend against Justice, in not satisfying that Trust, which God has repos'd in them, and doing great Injury to their Children, which, by the Law of God and of Nature, they are strictly bound to provide for; and these are sins not of an ordinary Guilt. For tho' Persons call their Estates and Money their own; yet they are not their own, to spend and throw away at the demand of every Vain, Idle, Extravagant or Vicious humor.

C H A P. VIII.

*Of Masters and Mistresses;
with regard to Servants.*

Q What is the Obligation of Masters and Mistresses, in relation to their Servants?

A. They have many Obligations: some as to their Souls, and and others, as to their Body.

First, As to what concerns their Souls; it ought to be the care of Masters and Mistresses, that their Servants live, as becomes Christians; hence they are to enquire, whether they say their Prayers; and if Circumstances would possibly allow it, it would be very proper, that Prayer were said in Public or Common, where Servants may be encourag'd in Duty, by the Example of those over them.

2. They are to see, they duly keep the Lord's day, and other days appointed to be kept Holy; and ought so to contrive business, that they may have nothing to hinder them from this Duty. Since God has Commanded Days to be set apart and Sanctify'd

fy'd, this Command ought to be kept; and it cannot be reasonable for Servants to be excluded from it, who being employ'd all the week, have little opportunity for taking care of their Souls, if these days, which God has given them, be taken from them. Let the trifling Occasions be consider'd, upon which Servants are rob'd of this Priviledge, and then the guilt of it will appear; and the reason likewise, why Masters are generally no better serv'd; for how can Servants be Faithful to their Masters, by whom they are hinder'd from Serving God? They ought likewise to see them provided with some good Books; as also with some Charitable Person, who may Instruct them in their Christian Duties.

3. They are to tolerate no Custom amongst them of Swearing, Cursing, Drinking, or of any kind of Prophane, Sinful or Unseemly Discourse. And if they have any Servant subject to one of these Failings, who after Three or Four Admonitions, or Reproofs, do not mend, it must be advisable to discharge them, for the good of their Family.

4. If they have sufficient reason to suspect any, as Subject to any degree

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gree of Immodesty, such ought forthwith to be remov'd.

5. They ought to be careful, not to command or order any thing, that is Sinful, or concurring to Sin: and above, all to give them good Example, so as never to say or do any thing, that may be an Encouragement to them to offend God, in word or deed. Example is very Contagious, and Servants of evil Inclinations, are Glad to find shelter under the Example of those, that are over them.

As to what concerns this World; First, Masters and Mistresses ought to be punctual in paying their Servants Wages. This God has strictly enjoin'd, and with great Severity declar'd the guilt of such, as neglect to do it. Hence, it must be their duty, not to keep more, than they are able to pay.

2. They are to see, their Provision be Sufficient and Wholesom; for their whole livelihood depending on their Labor, and their Labor on their Health it must be cruelty not to see them so provided, as may be consistent with health. A like care must be extended to their Lodging.

3. They are to find Employment for

for them, so as not to permit them to live an Idle Life, which however agreeable, yet cannot fail of being very injurious to them.

4. While they employ them, they are to be careful not to oppress them, for this is cruelty, and generally the effect of a Covetous Spirit. Compassion here ought to take place, so that while Necessity makes persons serve, they may yet have some comfort in their lives, and not be treated as Slaves.

5. Hence it must be a Christian part, not to expose their Servants, where they would spare their Beasts. Seasons and Weather ought to be consider'd, and Health and Life ought not to be ventur'd for Humor or Prolic.

6. They have power to command, but they must Remember, they are to give an account of what they command. There is a way of Commanding, which is Imperious and Harsh; and if some ungovernable Tempers seem to require it; yet thus to carry Thunder generally on the lips, is not agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel. Meekness and Moderation are much the better Character, and
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generally to be encourag'd; but if Anger be necessary, it ought to be manag'd with Discretion; for otherwise it turns into Passion, and this never do's good; oftner causing Contempt, than Reformation.

7. To be Silent, where Faults deserve Reproof or Correction, is Vicious Mildness and Unjust; and yet to be Always Finding Fault is another extreme, such as Deprives all Sides of Comfort. It is prudence to Over-look some Faults, and if Servants are generally Careful, it must not be advisable to disturb them about Trifles and Niceties, which being inconsiderable in themselves, are only magnify'd by Humor. Where there are Real Faults or remarkable Neglects, it is Reproof enough to Good Tempers, to see them pointed at; and where this will do, it must be an unnecessary trouble there to chide. But if some require Reproof, let not Anger be call'd in, till Mildness be found Ineffectual. Moderation and Sweetness have great Charms in them, and since the Gospel demands them of all its Professors, those who being Heads of Families, are bound to give good Example, ought not to lay them
by.

by. And if they find that Passion insensibly creeps upon them, they ought to be more watchful, and never venture to reprove any, while they are Angry. Finally Masters and Mistresses are at all times to be mindful, that their Servants are their Brethern, as Christians, and Fellow-Members under the same Head, and that they have one Master with them, to wit, Christ Jesus, who having no respect of Persons, will equally call all to account, both Bond and Free; and reward every one, not according to their Quality or degree here in this world, but according to their Fidelity to God; whence those, who have been here Contemptible, may come to be exalted in Glory above those, who on earth were more Honorable. Hence Respect is to be had to Servants, and they not Despis'd, whom God may raise to Honor above those, who despise them. Upon which consideration, it must be a Christian part in Masters, to shew this Respect to Servants, when they are sick, by taking all necessary Care of them, both for Soul and Body. *ally*, When they reprove them, by not doing it, till they have examin'd the Cause, and upon enquiry, have

evidence of their being in Fault. 3ly, By allowing them the liberty of speaking, if they have any thing Reasonable to offer in their own Excuse or Defence. Lastly, If they have liv'd many years and have been Faithful in their Service, by settling something upon them for life, that they may not want and be miserable in their old age, whose best years and Strength have been employ'd in their business.

C H A P. IX.

Of Servants.

Q. **W**HAT are the obligations of Servants?

A. They are many; First to God; Eternity being above this life, they are not to accept of a Place for a Livelihood, where they have not opportunity of serving God and taking due care of their Souls.

2. Where they have daily ill Example of Prophaness and of other Scandalous Vices.

3. Where they must serve their Master or others, in what is Sinful.

4. Where there is danger of being drawn

drawn into Sin, either by those, whom they serve, or by other Companions.

In these, or other like cases, if Servants, for Worldly advantages, accept of Places, where Eternity must be thus expos'd, they condemn themselves, of Loving this World more than God and their own Souls, and therefore exclude themselves from the number of Christ's Disciples.

Q. What other Obligations have Servants?

A. They have others to those, whom they serve. They are to be Faithful to them:

First in punctually doing what they have undertaken, and belongs to their Place: not as serving the Eye, and doing things carefully, when they are seen; but as serving the Lord, and for Conscience sake, with care discharging their duty, even when they are not seen, because it is their duty, and they have God the Witness of whatever they do.

2. In not wasting, misemploying or giving away, what belongs to their Master, without his Consent or knowledge. Hence Justice ties up the hands of Servants, that they are not to dispose of what is their Masters, but as he is pleas'd

pleas'd to order it: neither are they to treat or entertain their Friends or Companions, at their Master's Cost.

3. They are not to let their Master be a Loser thro' their Neglect. There are many things in a Family which are prejudic'd, and other things which become wholly Useless, thro' the Sloth, Neglect, or Forgetfulness of Servants; and the want of Taking pains has often the same ill effect. Now whatever Servant lets his Master be a Sufferer upon this account, such a Servant must be esteem'd Faithless, and cannot therefore have a good Conscience without amendment.

4. In being exactly Just in giving account of whatever Goods or Money they have belonging to their Master, and not taking any to their own use.

5. In not making any advantage to themselves, of what belongs to their Master. Therefore in Buying or Selling, all the Profit, tho' never so Extraordinary, is the Master's Right; and if they make any Bargain, for their own Gain, this cannot be Just, any farther, than the Master is consenting to it.

Whatever therefore a Servant undertakes, ought to be done with great Care

Care and Fidelity ; and in so doing a Servant gives proof of his having a Good Conscience.

Q. What other Obligation have Servants to those, whom they serve ?

A. They have an obligation of being obedient to them. First, in doing what they are commanded.

2. In doing it willingly and cheerfully, without murmuring or Signs of Displeasure.

3. In being Exact and Punctual in doing what they are order'd ; avoiding all unnecessary delays, in Messages or other business recommended to them : and not putting off to another time, what is better done at present, and cannot be differr'd, without danger of being forgot.

4. In not complying with any orders, which are Contrary to the Law of God, nor concurring in any thing, that is Sinful ; for in such cases God is to be obey'd before man.

Q. What other Obligation have Servants to those, whom they serve ?

A. They have another obligation of Respect. By this they are bound, first, to express outwardly that Respect, both in Words and Actions, which is due

to

to those, who, by God's appointment, have Authority over them.

2. This obliges them to avoid all kind of Discourse, both with Companions and Strangers, which may lessen the Reputation of those, whom they serve; and requires them to defend their Good Name, as often as Calumny or Ill will attempts to blacken them.

3. It obliges them to conceal their Private faults, and not to discover any Failing or Ill circumstance of the Family, which is yet a secret to the world. Hence they are always, in things lawful, to espouse their Master's Interest, to defend him with Moderation, and serve him with affection and tenderness, rather as a Father than a Master.

These are some Principal Points to be observ'd by all such, as are in Service; and being such, as God has enjoyn'd them, and what particularly belong to their State, none of this degree can pretend to a good Conscience, if they do not make a Conscience of them; if they do not diligently enquire, what their Duties are, and faithfully endeavor to perform them.

C H A P. X.

Of Servants.

I Have still something farther to enquire of Servants; and first, how they are to behave themselves, when they are reprov'd or chid?

A. Always with Submission and Patience. But different circumstances may require a different method.

First, If the Reproof be for some real Fault, then the Reproof is due, and they ought to consider it, as an Act of Justice, to receive it with Patience. In such case therefore they are oblig'd in *Silence* to bear the Anger they have brought upon themselves; and consequently, they are not to murmur, nor complain of Ill humor or Severity; for this would be to accuse the Master, when the Fault is their own.

Q. But if Servants are of that difficult temper, that they cannot take any Reproof, without making themselves Uneasy, and shewing Ill humor to their Masters?

A. Such as cannot bear Reproof, are to be the more careful in not giving any occasion for it; by such care, they may

make their lives Easy and Comfortable; and if they are not thus Careful, they are certainly most unreasonable, in complaining of Uneasiness, and yet every day drawing it upon themselves, by their Neglect &c.

Q. May they not make some Excuse, for avoiding Anger?

A. They are never to excuse themselves by a Lie; for this is defending themselves with the Devil's Arms, and offending God, to escape the Anger of men, which is not a Christian part. The much better way, is to own the Fault, to promise amendment, and to take the Reproof with Patience. This is the Defence of the Gospel, and those, who have a Faith in what it prescribes, will find it more to the purpose, in the good effects of it, than to take shelter in a Lie.

Q. But if Reproof be without just reason?

A. They are to have Patience still: and if the Moderate Temper of those over them, will give them leave to speak, they may in a Few, peaceable and respectful words declare the Truth; and so leave their Cause, till in some other opportunity, it may have a more favorable Hearing.

But

But if the Passion or Hasty Temper of Masters, will not allow any defence; Silence is then the best Expedient for the present, and that, which will soonest moderate the Storm. And, if the Cause be weighty enough to require it, they may afterwards, when they have the encouragement of Good Humor, either by themselves, or by some other, who has greater liberty of speaking, let their Case be known. This is much better than an unseasonable Defence, which, tho' Just, is not only lost, but very often more provokes, by being ill tim'd. And here it is, as in most other Cases, that our Uneasiness and Trouble are generally the effect of our own Indiscretion.

Q. Is it not a great Unhappiness for Servants to be thus expos'd to all kinds of uneasiness, to Humors and Unjust Reproofs?

A. There is no State of life, but what is mix'd with variety of Trials, and some more severe, than is usually found in Service. But in this all Degrees are equal; That God has regard to all those, who suffer with Patience, and will be a Faithful Rewarder of them; and more particularly of such, as Suffer wrongfully. In this God has particularly

particularly manifested his will to Servants, requiring them, by the mouth of *S. Peter*, to be Subject with all fear, not only to Good and Gentle Masters, but also to Froward: and declaring, that, if they take it Patiently, when they do well, and Suffer for it, it is an acceptable thing with God. 1 Pet. 2. 18. This encouragement then they have from heaven, to Submit with Patience to all the Difficulties of their State; and in following such Direction, they may find Comfort, if they are Christians, where all other Comforts are wanting.

Q. Is there no other Patience necessary for Servants?

A. Yes, with the Labor, Attendance and with all other difficulties of their Condition, but especially with their Fellow-Servants; so that if any are Ill humor'd, Peevish, Malicious, Indiscreet, or otherwise disagreeable, or Subject to give ill language, they are to have Patience with such; endeavoring to overcome evil with good; and if this has no visible effect on them, they are to have compassion on them, as on Unhappy Persons, and be so Moderate with them, as to avoid Quarrels and Dissensions and to keep Peace. This is the Rule of the Gospel, and is not

not to be dispens'd with. Whence it is plain, there must be no returning evil, for evil, no Malicious Designs or Complaints against one another, no Envyng or Grudging, no Backbiting, or Provoking, but they are to live in the practice of Charity, Peace and Love, as becomes Brethren.

Besides, they are not to discourage or dissuade one another from their Works.

Nor to make Parties, and Factions in the Family against one another; much less against those, who are over them; nor joyn in Murmuring or Complaints, so to raise or encrease Discontents; for this is not only Uncharitable, but to be Faithless and Treacherous: nor to be out of humor or Morose, upon every accident.

Nor to seek or admit too great Familiarities, for this is the beginning of many Follies and Sins.

Nor to divert themselves with any kind of Sinful Discourse or Songs; for this is calling in the Devil to make them Merry.

By the observance of these Rules, Servants may preserve a good Conscience, amidst the Difficulties of their State; and if they would be so Pi-

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ous as to mix Prayers with their Labors, and endeavor to offer these to God, in Union with the Labors of Christ, who took upon him the Form of a Servant and came to Serve, they may become acceptable to God, and not only work out their Salvation, but even go before those, who in this world have much the advantage of them.

C H A P. XI.

Of Laborers, Shop-keepers and all Traders.

Q. **W**HAT is the Obligation of Laborers?

A. That they be Faithful, in what they have undertaken, and in doing in all respects, according to Agreement.

First, That they be Faithful, as to the Time; spending it wholly in their Service, who have hir'd them; so that whether they have any over-seer or no, they are not to Idle away the time, nor Neglect it or employ it in any other Business. For being hir'd, the Time is not now their own,

but

but his, who is to pay them, and if they defraud him of it, they are Unjust.

2. That they be Faithful, as to their Labor and Care, so that the Work or Business, they undertake, be done well, and he, who has hir'd them, be no Loser thro' their Neglect, Carelessness or want of taking due pains; which in many cases may happen.

3. That they neither keep, nor carry away, or apply to their own use, any thing belonging to those, who employ them; for this being not their own, it must be nothing less than Fraud or Stealing; and no practice or Custom can make it otherwise, if it be done without the Consent or Permission of the Owner.

4. That they demand not more Materials, than they sincerely judge the Work to require: nor any other way put those, that employ them, to any Unnecessary Expence.

Q. What is the Obligation of Shopkeepers and other Traders?

A. To be Just in all they do, so as to deceive or cheat no body, with whom they deal. They must be

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Just in Selling, First, as to the things or Goods which they Sell.

1. In not putting off damag'd or perish'd goods, for Sound; nor what is imperfect, for Entire; nor Distemper'd, for Healthy; nor Counterfeit, for True; nor Rotten, for Strong, &c. For whoever do's not observe this, cheats him, that buys, and is therefore Unjust.

2. In not putting into a Buyer's Hands, what is altogether useles, for the End, for which it is bought, Especially, when the use is declar'd by him, that buys.

3. In not Selling Goods, Which are not their own.

4. In not Selling Stolen Goods.

5. In not Selling things, which are in themselves Evil, Sinful &c. As may Easily be in Books, Pictures. &c.

They are to be Just, as to the Price.

1. In not Selling for more than the value, with regard to Circumstances.

2. In not taking any advantage of the Ignorance of the Buyer.

3. In not taking the price of what is Sound and Good, for things, that are Dammag'd or Counterfeit.

4. In

4. In not using Deceits for raising the Price of Goods, or for making them appear more valuable, than they really are.

5. In not Monopolizing Goods, for raising their Price, and for oppressing the Poor, which is declar'd an Abomination to God.

6. In not using False Weights or Measures ; which is declar'd to be another like Abomination.

7. In not using Lies or Oaths, for bringing Customers to a Reasonable Price: and this is much more Criminal, if it be, for getting above the value ; for then there is Injustice and Perjury in so doing.

There must be Justice likewise in Buying.

First, In not buying Stolen Goods ; for this is to buy of those, who have no right to Sell, as likewise to encourage them in their Theft.

2. In not taking advantage of the Ignorance of the Seller, and buying Goods, much under the true and Common price.

3. In not making advantage of the Seller's Distress ; and offering him only under-rates, because he is in want of ready money ; or taking Goods at

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less than the value, as a Creditor may be tempted to do, for suspending an Arrest, with which, for this design he has threatned him.

4. In not using lying pretexts, Frauds or any kind of deceit, for getting Goods at less than their real value.

5. In being very careful in keeping the Shop-book; for this standing good in Law; it must be occasion of many unjust payments, if there be not great exactness, in cancelling whatever is paid &c.

These may serve, as General Heads, for the Direction of all such, as trade, and must be apply'd by every particular Profession; for in all these there are so many little Artifices and ways of Dealing belonging to them, that it is almost impossible even to touch at the Variety of Frauds, to which they are Subject; but this must be left to those, who are concern'd. Those, who are willing to do well, must remember what *S. Paul* has declar'd, *That no man over-reach or defraud his Brother in any matter, because the Lord is the Avenger of all such.* 1 Thess. 4. 6. and to this Test must bring the method of their Profession. For there is so much Knavery in most Trades, that whoever will

will take Common practice for a good Rule, without bringing it to the Examen, will be in danger of practising what is Unjust; and if the Only Plea for this be, *For gaining a livelihood*, it is what may be taken up by Thieves and Pick-pockets &c. and it will be no easy Task to prove, Why it may not be as good a Warrant in one Case, as the other.

C H A P. XII.

Obligations of Justice in other, Professions, Offices, Employments.

Q. **W**Hat more Obligations of Justice are there?

A. Every Profession, Office and Employment has some; all of them having Obligations annex'd to them, which are the Conditions of the Profit, and if not duly perform'd are an offence against Justice.

The Doctor and Surgeon &c. undertake a Cure; if they neglect their Patient; if they will not consider his Case; if they make delays in his Cure &c. they are Unjust to him, rob him

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of his money, and many times of his
life.

The Lawyer is consulted by his Client: If he puts him upon Unreasonable or Unjust Disputes; if he encourages or flatters him in Vexatious Suits, which have no other design, but to perplex or ruin his Neighbor; if he undertakes to manage any such Cause or others, which he knows to be evidently Unjust; If undertaking a Just Cause, he neglects to enquire into the merits of it, and hazards the loss of it, for want of taking due pains for manifesting its Right; if he contrives ways for putting off the Hearing or otherwise prolonging the Suit, either for his own advantage, or for tiring out his adversary with unreasonable Charges; if he puts his Client to Unnecessary Expences; If he concurs or consents to the Falsifying Deeds or Wills &c. or in whatever other way, either by positively concurring or by Faulty Neglect, he do's wrong to his Client or to the Opponent, he has so much of Injustice to answer for; and if ever he be Serious in Repenting, ought to enquire, how far it may be necessary for him to make Restitution.

Many

Professions, Offices, Employments. 417

Many undertake to be Trustees and Guardians ; If these have little or no regard to what they have undertaken, so that the Parties concern'd, are wrong'd thro' their want of Care and Inspection, or for not taking Accounts. If they are careful, but manage for their own Advantage, and nor for those, who are in their Trust : If they any ways concur in or consent to any thing in wrong to their Trust, however they may palliate it, as to satisfy or elude the Law, yet they have so much Injustice to answer to God, and ought to enquire, how far they are bound to Restitution.

If those, who have the care of the Poor, or are concern'd in other Collections, turn any part of it, above what may be allow'd, to their own use ; if they make unnecessary Expences, and set it down to the Stock ; if they any other way concur in or consent to any thing in their wrong, for whom they Act, they have so much Injustice to answer before God, and ought to enquire, how far they are bound to Restitution.

If those, who are Baylifs or Stewards, or have any other part in gathering in or paying out of Money, thro'

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thro' their Neglect make those losers
who Employ them; if they unreason-
ably oppress Debtors, and the Poor,
for their own gain; if they are In-
dustrious in turning to their own ad-
vantage what, in right, is the Masters;
if they make ill Contracts or Hazard-
ous for the Master, but for their own
profit; If they connive at or favor
those, who injure the Master; If they
any other way, either of Neglect or
Contract &c. concur in or consent to
any thing in their Master's wrong and
for their own gain, they have so much
Injustice to answer before God, and
ought to enquire, how far they are
bound to Restitution.

If those, who are in Debt, are not
Solicitous to discharge it and the Per-
sons, to whom it is due are Sufferers for
want of their Money, as it is with most
Trading people: if Persons live at a
Rate, above what their Estate or In-
come will bear, and, for this reason,
are not able to pay off old Debts, but
contract new: if Ambition, Intemper-
ance, Vanity, Idleness or any Vicious
Extravagance be the occasion of run-
ning into Debt; as many Persons as suf-
fer for want of their Money, which is
due, so many Arguments there are of
their

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Injustice, who owe it; and if the many dismal Consequences of such Non-payments could be duly laid before them, I believe, they would in many cases find, that tho' they at length pay their Debts, yet they shall never be able to make Restitution for the injuries they have done, by the delay of payments.

If Judges or other Inferior Magistrates are not Solicitous to do Justice, but permit their Judgments to be corrupted by Passion, Favor, Party or Interest, they in this do Injury to Right, and the Ill effects may be so great, whether as to Estate, Reputation or Life, that however they may be willing, yet it may be never in their power to make Restitution for the wrongs they have done.

If the Persons on a Jury have not a due regard to what is Just and Right, but are bias'd by any Passion or Party or Interest, and accordingly bring in their Verdict; they in this do what is Unjust, and instead of rejoicing, for that their Party or Friend has carry'd the Cause, or that their Enemy has been worsted, they have reason to grieve all their lives, and may have more Restitution upon their hands, than

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than it will be ever in their power to
make.

If Church men use undue means for
gaining of Benefices; if by their In-
terest they obtain such a Benefice, the
Obligations of which they are not able
to Satisfy: if they are not solicitous to
inform themselves, What are the Ob-
ligations of their Function or Benefice;
if knowing them, they do not Zealously
labor to satisfy them; if enjoying
without labor the Fruits of a Benefice,
they consume that, which was given
for the Relief of the Poor, and with a
scanty allowance keep one to do their
work, who, as it may easily prove, may
not be qualify'd for the half part of
the Function; if they are any other
way wanting in the just care, which is
due to the Flock; they may easily in-
cur the guilt of great Injustice and Sa-
cristy, and may be bound to such Re-
stitution, as may be never in their pow-
er to make.

Thus the obligation of Justice be-
longs to all states, and if Christians are
carry'd away by the violence of Passion
or Interest, and are so bent in gaining
their own Ends, that they have little
regard to what Justice demands, they
must unavoidably run into great crimes,
and

and be entangled in such variety of debts by the Wrong they do, that the Truest Repentance must be at a loss what to do, to deliver them from the unhappy Consequences of their past Injustice.

C H A P. XIII.

Of Subjects.

Q. **W**HAT is the obligation of Subjects?

A. Their Name tells them; the Obligation of Subjects is to be Subject. This is a Command deliver'd by S. Paul, Rom. 13. 1. *Let every Soul be Subject unto the Higher Powers.* While he enjoins this to *Every Soul*, he shews the Duty to be Universal, and therefore, that none are to think themselves exempted, for that the words of the Apostle leave no place for such exemption.

Q. Then Subjects are to make a Conscience of being thus Subject?

A. So the same Apostle expressly declares; *Ye must needs be Subject, not only for wrath, but also for Conscience sake.* Rom, 13. 5.

Q. What

Q. What is the ground of this Obligation, which thus lays a Tie upon Conscience?

A. The Apostle expresses it in terms above dispute; *The Powers, that be, are ordain'd of God.* ib. v. 1. *They are the Ministers of God.* v. 6. The Will of God thus manifested obliges Conscience to approve and obey; and it cannot depart from this, without Confusion to it self, because it must always acknowledge this Subjection to be the Ordinance of God, and that in departing from it, it departs from God.

Q. Then no Resistance is to be allow'd?

A. The same Apostle answers this; *Whoſoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they, that resist, ſhall receive to themselves damnation.* v. 2. This determination is Plain, Positive and Absolute: and therefore is to be a standing and Perpetual Law to Christians, which they are bound to follow, and by which, those, who transgress it, are to be judg'd: and the Judgment is already fixt, that *they who resist, ſhall receive Damnation.*

Q. But what if those in Power be vicious and Sinful men?

A. Their Sins are from themselves, and they

they must answer for them; but their Power is from God, and that is always Good: we must therefore Submit to their Power, while we disapprove their morals.

Q. But, what if they command Unlawful things?

A. The Scripture, in this case, declares what is to be done; *We ought to obey God, rather than men.* Act. 5. 29. Supreme Magistrates have their Commission from God, as his Ministers; all their Authority therefore being from God, such commands of theirs cannot have Divine Authority, which are Contrary to the manifest Will of God; and therefore ought not to be obey'd.

Q. Then Conscience is dispens'd with, in this general obedience?

A. Conscience obeys, where God commands; it has his Command in both Cases, both as to its Submitting, and likewise When it ought not to submit. But then this Conscience ought to be very well grounded, on a Divine Authority, and not on the Enthusiasms or Conceits of Private Imagination: For it cannot be reasonable upon such Imaginations, tho' call'd Conscience, to stand against the manifest Will of God, and disobey Powers, which he has commanded

manded all to obey.

Q. But if Higher Powers joyn severe Penalties with their Unlawful Commands, and punish those, who disobey?

A. In such case, a Person must either peaceably withdraw from such a Government, or peaceably suffer the Penalty impos'd on those, who refuse to Submit.

Q. May not Christians, in this case, endeavor to vindicate the Cause of God, and by Secret Contrivance or open Arms, strive to gain liberty for their Conscience against such Unjust Oppression?

A. They may use all such Means, as the Gospel allows, which are Fasting, Prayers and Tears, with an Humble Patience under their Affliction; But as for Plots, Rebellion or any Violence, these are not the Arms of the Gospel, and therefore not to be taken up by such as Profess it. All Extremities ought rather to be suffer'd, than Relief sought by such Unwarrantable Means.

Q. Can you prove this by Example and Practice?

A. Modern Practice is most on the other side, but Fact is no Rule. Example

ample however and Practice enough we have from the Primitive Christians; to whom all at present appeal; for these patiently suffer'd, for three hundred years, all the Inventions of the most barbarous Cruelty, without ever attempting to seek relief, either by Plots or Violence, against those Heathen Emperors, by whose Edicts they were subjected to that long Persecution. This Lesson of Suffering with Submission to Civil Laws, has been left us by our Primitive Predecessors; and it being so agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel, it is what we ought to follow, learning from them to glory in Tribulation, rather than seek a Deliverance by the help of Plots or the Sword. Primitive Faith ought not to be Separated from this Primitive Practice.

This is the Gospel-Rule for Subjects, authoris'd by good practice. As to all Lawful Commands they ought to be Obedient, as owning the Power of their Rulers to be from God: and for all the Penalties, for not Submitting to Commands, which a good Conscience believes to be Unlawful, they are with Patience to bear them, waiting upon God and his Time, when he shall please to send Peace. As to all other things,

things, the Law of God commands Subjects to Honor their Rulers, to pay Tribute to them, and never to Revile or Speak evil of them. This is the Order, God has establish'd for the Government of the World, and if every one would satisfy that Part, in which God has plac'd them, by being attentive to their own Affairs, and leaving the Governing part to those, to whom it belongs, Peace and Order would be best preserv'd, and Conscience could not fail of its Satisfaction, either in a Comfortable Liberty, or a Patient Suffering.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Rich.

Q. **W**Hat are the Obligations of the Rich?

A. They are many and great, for having receiv'd more than others, they have the greater account; and therefore their Obligations must encrease in proportion to what they have receiv'd.

They have an Obligation to their own Safety, to be Watchful against the Dangers

Dangers of Riches.

1. That they set not their hearts upon them by Love; *For the Love of Money is the root of all evil.* 1 Tim. 6.

10. And if it be such a Love, as comes to be *Covetousness*, this draws the heart from God, makes an Idol of Riches, and hence is declar'd by the Apostle to be *Idolatry*. Col. 3. 5.

2. That the Love of Riches destroy not their Faith; for that the large enjoyments of things Present, naturally draw the Desire, from the Concern, and even from the Faith of Invisible Goods, which are to come.

3. That the Love of Riches extinguish not their Hope; for that the Variety of Helps they have in Riches, in being fenc'd by them against such Variety of evils, is apt to lessen their Hope in God, and to make them put their Trust more in their Money, than in God.

They have an obligation to be Watchful against many other Temptations, which are the Consequence of Riches; for *they that will be Rich, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.* 1 Tim. 6. 9.

1. That

1. That they lose not all Charity to the Poor ; for that feeling no wants they may hence become insensible of what others suffer ; and being so very much taken up in the concern for themselves, may be in danger of not considering the Wants of others.

2. That they turn not their Riches to the Service of Vanity and Ambition, in providing Rich Cloths, Great Retinue, Costly Furniture, Numbers of Servants. &c. And these for the Magnifying Sinful Clay.

3. That they turn not their Riches to the Service of Gluttony or Intemperance, in loading their Tables with many Changes of Costly Superfluities, or Furnishing them and their Companions with Variety of Liquors, till they drink away all the Comforts of their Families, their Time, their Senses, Estates, their Religion and their Souls.

4. That they turn not their Riches to maintain an Idle life, in the great Expence of Horses and Dogs, and in other Sports, Games or Entertainments, by which their whole lives are nothing better than a Succession or Change of Idleness.

5. That they prostitute not their Riches

Riches in the Service of vice, nor turn the Gifts of God against himself, by letting them be the main-
tainance of Sin.

These are some of the Temptation of Riches, some of the Foolish and and Hurtful, Lusts (of which the Apostles speaks) which drown men in Destruction and Perdition. For what other end can those unhappy Christians expect, who being distinguish'd from infinite others, by Plenty of Blessings, distinguish themselves again from others by being more Remarkable Sinners, and abusing those very Blessings, which God has given them, to his greater offence ? Let these but consider the sad Fate of the Rich man in the Gospel. *Luk. 16. 19.* Let them consider his Character, *Of being cloth'd in Purple and Fine linnen, of Faring Sumptuously every day, and of not regarding the Poor at his Gate,* and then Seeing all this in themselves, besides the great Addition of many Scandalous and daily Sins, let them make up their account, and guess, whether they have grounds to hope for a more Favorable Lot.

Q. If the Rich then have reason to be careful in these Particulars, and these

these are to be avoided, What is it they are to do?

A. They are every day to return Thanks to God, for the Blessing of Plenty, receiv'd from him: and every day Solicite for his grace, that they may make a right use of what he has given, and be such Good and Faithful-Stewards, that they may be able to give an account of the Talents receiv'd.

2. They are daily to employ their Money in such Uses, as the Necessity, Decency and Comfort of their Family may Reasonable require. Nothing is to be wanting, thro' Covetousness or Humor, to Wife or Children or Servants; but all things are to be provided, necessary for their Good, with the Addition of all others, as Discretion joyn'd in Council with Christian Temperance, shall Judge convenient in their several and respective Circumstances. And if any thing be wanting to the Good, Christian Education or Disposing of Children, thro' any Unwillingness to part with Money, this cannot be excus'd from being very Criminal.

3. They are to be very Liberal to the Poor, and ready to put a hand to all kinds

kinds of Charities according to their Circumstances. This Charity in giving Alms is a Command of God both in the Old Testament and in the New: It is an Act of Justice, because God so Orders it, who is the Lord of all, and upon that Title, has a Right to command. It is most acceptable to God and most prevailing for the Pardon of Sins, tho' not of such, as are not forsaken, and therefore Necessary for those, who have the guilt of many Sins to answer for, and otherwise are not much Accustom'd to the ways of Penance.

4. They are not to put off their Charities to their Death, for then they give what they cannot keep, and therefore not their own.

5. They are not to disable themselves from performing Charities to the Poor; but making Unnecessary Purchases, and providing Immense Portions. For this is Robbing the Poor, by contriving to make their Children Great, when their greater concern ought to be to make them Happy, which might be more Reasonably expected from their giving of Alms, than by heaping up that
for

for them which ought to have been given to the Poor.

These few Rules may serve, and I wish God would inspire the Rich men of our days to practice them. For it is a Scandal to the Christian Name, to see, how Riches are abus'd, to see, how they are the Persons, who, above all, draw Judgments upon themselves and the World, who are best Furnish'd above all, for obtaining Eternal Blessings for themselves, and Distributing many Blessings to those that want them.

CH A P. XV

Of the Poor.

Q. **W**Hat are the Obligations of the Poor

A. They are to ? beg every day for the Grace of God, to Suffer with Patience the Difficulties of their State, and to make a right use of all they Suffer.

2. That they may be Encourag'd in Patience they are to consider every day the Doctrin and Example of Jesus Christ, who prefer'd Poverty to Riches
in

in the Promise made to the Poor in Spirit, of his Eternal Kingdom; who chose to be Born and to live in Poverty, so as not to have, where to lay his Head. *Mat. 8. 20.* Even when he had all the Riches in the World at Command, as being Lord of all, he chose to be thus Poor.

3. They are to consider the Danger of Riches, and how these hazard the Salvation of those, that possess them, and then see, if a Christian may not find Comfort, in being Free from the Dangers of Damnation, as much as men do, in being free from Temporal Dangers.

4. They are to reflect upon the general Abuse of Riches, and then see, whether there be not reason to rejoice, that they have not, wherewith to Feed and Strengthen their natural Corruption; that they have not money to spend upon Vanity, Gluttony and Intemperance; that they have not Money to leave at Taverns, Play-houses, and at all the Shops, whose Furniture is to inform those, who want nothing, what they want; that they have not money enough, to give them opportunity of living an Idle life, of letting Sleep, Dressing, Feasting, Gaming, unprofit-
V
able

able Visiting, Sports, Company, Parks, Music, &c. divide their days: that they have not Money enough to make them Imperious and Haughty, nor to oppress or do violence to the Poor: that they have not Money enough to live a soft, Sensual and Voluptuous life: these and many other such Abuses they are to consider, and then see, whether it be not the better portion, to suffer their Wants, than to have a part in the Abuses of Plenty, or even for us, so weak as we are (and let Example shew what our Weakness is.) to be in the danger of it.

5. They are not only Free from these many Temptations, in which so many Souls perish, but they have many fair and unavoidable Occasions of practising those Virtues, which are most conformable to the Gospel, and most acceptable to Heaven; as of *Patience*, under their many wants of those things, which they see others throw away; of *Humility*, under the many Affronts, Contempts and Oppressions, to which they are expos'd; and of the *Contempt of the World*, which is so very Uneasy to them. But then, it must be

be their daily endeavor, to make use of these daily Occasions, by accepting them as the Means, which God offers them, for the saving their Souls. Hence they are not to yield to any Impatience, Dejection or Murmuring, under their wants; but carefully suppress all such Motions. They are not to express any Passion, upon receiving Affronts, nor reproach such, as seem to Neglect or slight them; but all is to be receiv'd with an Humble Submission, such as may do good to their Souls, while outwardly they seem to suffer.

6. They are to receive all the Hardships of their State, as the Punishment of Sin, and as the Execution of that Sentence, which God pronounc'd against *Adam*, and all his Posterity. If they could come to the Practice of this Lesson, they would be envy'd amidst all their unhappiness; for certainly, so many are the Mortifications Inseparable from their State, that could they Submit to them, as to God's Scourge of Sin, they might have hence Reason to be less apprehensive of the Justice to come, and by their Patient Humility, would be fitted for Saints.

7. They are to have a great Confidence in God, amidst their greatest Dejection and Distress, and not only be mindful of the Promises he has made to the Poor and Afflicted, to the Fatherless and Widow; but likewise, that he is Faithful to his Promises, and cannot forsake those, who being prov'd, are found Faithful to their Trials. The special Patronage then of God ought to be their daily Comfort, and likewise his Promises of Future Happiness, to those, that weep. Their Distress is a Trial of their Hope in God; and therefore being under temptation, they are to be Constant, and with their eyes and heart waiting on him, retain still a Firm Trust in God; Confiding, that he will either give them Patience or Send Relief.

8. While they Trust in God, they are to be Industrious in whatever Work they can do; because the Blessing of God is to be expected upon those, that Labor, which the Idle and Slothful have no reason to hope for. Such then, as can get their bread by Labor, and yet seek to live by Alms, are not the Poor of the Gospel, but rather Robbers of the Poor, and

Abusers of Charity. But as for those, who are disabled by Sickness, Age &c. they come not into this list; but by a Submissive Patience, may hope to partake of the Protection and Blessing promis'd to the Poor.

9. Those, who being Poor, desire to be reckon'd among the Poor of the Gospel, ought not to be Covetous in their Heart or Desire; For to have a Covetous and Worldly Spirit joyn'd with a real want, is to have the Misery of Poverty without the Blessing. To desire Necessaries and Conveniencies, is very Lawful, but to be content under Want, is the better Spirit.

If those, who are Poor, carefully decline all unlawful means for a Subsistence, and to the best of their Industry, Labor for bread; If they endeavor to practice these Rules, and live in a Content of Submission to the Will of God; if not withstanding all their discouragements of this life, they are careful in their Devotions, and omit not their duties to God; if thus they go on, they have reason to be comforted with the prospect of a Future life, and wait with the hopes of that hour, which tho' a terror to

the Rich, will be to them the hour of changing their Sorrow into Joy.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the Sick.

Q. **W**Hat are the Obligations of the Sick?

A. They are many; some as to the next life, some as to this; but all with Relation to the next, as a Preparation for it.

1. They are to look upon all Sick-ness, as the Call or Summons of God, who by that calls upon them, to turn their Thoughts more particularly to the Business of a Future State: and to make the best Preparation, they are then able for it, or rather to finish that Preparation they have been making all their Lives; for so it ought to be.

2. Upon its first approach, they are to make a Free Offering of themselves to God with all their Hearts, committing themselves entirely into his Hand, with a free Submission to whatever he has ordain'd for them, whatever the Sentence be, whether

of

of Life or Death. Adding this hearty Request, that he will please to assist them with his Grace, that with Patience they may suffer whatever he has appointed for them, and be Purify'd by Suffering, like Gold in the Furnace.

3. Having made choice of some Skilful Physician, they are to be governable in their Sickness, and take what is Judg'd proper for them; because their life is not their own, but given them in trust, and it is a duty of Justice to use all Lawful Means for its preservation; but they are rather to choose Death a Thousand times, then seek help by any Unlawful Means. This being done, or rather before.

4. They are to send for a Spiritual Physician, one, whose Charity will be most helpful to them, in making their Peace with God, and give them all Necessary assistance thro-out their Sickness. By his help, they are without delay, to seek for Mercy by a true Repentance, and put their Souls in such a State, that if Death should be the speedy conclusion of their Sickness, they should not be found unprepar'd. It cannot be Wisdom to

put off and delay this Preperation;
1. because it requires all the forces of the Soul and best attention of the Mind to do it well, and therefore ought not to be put off, till a Person being disabled, is not Master of his own Thoughts, and if by good accident, he knows what he do's, knows that he is able to do little, and therefore cannot but be perplex'd, for having delay'd that to the last, which ought to have been done in the first place. 2. Because Sickness is Uncertain, and no body can be secure, how long he shall keep his Senses or Life. 3. Because being follow'd with Sleeping Medicines, he may never be awake enough to think as that Business requires, but may go Sleeping out of the World. 4. Because, to prepare for dying, do's not hasten Death; and to be Unwilling or Affraid to think of it, is a great Temptation and Delusion of the Devil, and of fatal consequence to yield to it.

5. The next thing never to be delay'd, is the Settling Temporal affairs or Making a Will. This ought to have been done in time of Health, and it cannot be Wisdom to Neglect the doing it; but if omitted, the Omission

Omission ought to be speedily suppli-
ed; because it requires good Consi-
deration, and therefore ought not to
be put off, till such a time, when a
Persons scarce knows what he do's,
and by a Hasty Will or by No Will,
may leave Confusion to his Family
and Misery to such, whom he intend-
ed to provide for, which is but an
ill preparation for going out of the
World.

6. In the time of his Sickness, he
ought to desire some Charitable Friend
to Read in some Good Book (as may
be proper for his Circumstances) and
to Pray by him every day, Morning
and Evening. For tho' he be disabled
himself, yet he ought not to be de-
priv'd of this help, at a time, when
he stands most in need of it. Read-
ing being a proper Means for Set-
tling his Thoughts aright, and Pray-
er being the great Expedient for ob-
taining the Divine Assistance, in time
of his Distress: yet both these ought
to be Short, or with some Interrup-
tions, so not to tire too much his
Spirits with a long Attention.

7. He ought to Desire his best
Friends, to put him in mind, if there
be any danger apprehended of his
dying

dying; it being the most friendly part they can do; and nothing being more not only Unkind, but Unchristian, than to let a man go out of the World, without thinking of it, upon the pretext of not giving him disturbance, as if it were a disturbance at that time, to be put in mind of preparing for Death.

8. He ought to call to mind all those Persons, with whom he has any Difference or Dispute, and either to them or their Friends, declare his sincere desire of being reconcil'd; that he Heartily Forgives all Injuries, as likewise that he begs their pardon, whom he has Injur'd, and is willing to make whatever Satisfaction is due.

9. If the Number and Grievousness of his Sins tempt him to Despair, and perswade him, that it is now too late, he ought to suppress all such Thoughts, and resolve to do the best and all he is able, in present Circumstances; for tho' the best Preparation for a good Death and that, which gives the greatest Assurance, is a Good Life, which is the Method of all Wise Christians; yet none ought to limit the Mercies of God, but Endeavor to make the best

best of his Time, which is left; for it is certainly much wiser, to do all he can, tho' with great danger of Miscarriage, than to lie down in Despair and be certainly lost. If a Sinner terrify'd by the approach of Death, becomes Sensible of his unhappy state, and knowing, that he has no help, but in the merits of Christ alone, runs to him with an entire Confidence in his Passion, protesting that he is truly Sorry from his Heart for all the Sins he has Comitted, and importunes him to become Advocate for this unhappy Sinner; if he do's this sincerely and with a true Faith who knows, but God may be converted to him, and shew Mercy?

10. If he recovers, he ought to beg the Continuance of that Charity, of some Friend to Read and Pray by him twice, at least, every day: and when he has Strength to sit up or go abroad, he ought to be so mindful of his Benefactor, as to consecrate the First-fruits of his recover'd health to him by Prayer, Devotion or going to Church, and not to Gaming, the Play-house or Tavern: and his principal Study ought now to be, how he may amend his former life,
and

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and be more Faithful in the Service of God.

As to what has been said about making a Will, this may be remember'd; That Justice ought to be satisfy'd in paying of Debts and making Restitution where due, before any Legacies of Charity are made: and that amongst such Charities, Helping the Poor is the most acceptable; Poor Relations in the first place, and then to think of Orphans and Widows and Distress'd House-keepers, and Prisoners, &c. Such Legacies are more Christian, than to add to their Heaps, who want nothing, or mispend what they have, or than to add to their Fortunes, who have enough to be happy, but not enough to be made a Prey and become miserable.

C H A P. XVII.

Of Such as cannot Read or have not Time to Pray.

Q. **A**RE not all Christians bound to Pray? How then shall they do, who cannot Read?

A. They

Or have not Time to Pray. 445

A. They may do very well, if they please, having many ways to Pray, tho' they cannot read.

1. They may joyn with others in all Public Prayer; for this requires no more, than their joyning in Spirit, with those that Pray.

2. They may often obtain the Charity of some Companion or Friend, to Read and Pray with them. There being few Families, in which such a Charitable Person may not be found.

3. They may Pray every day and at all Opportunities in their Spirit and Hearts; raising these to God, and asking all Blessings of him. And their prayer of the Heart is the best, if not the Only, Prayer; since the Motion of the lips, can never reach Heaven, if it be not quicken'd from the heart.

Q. But if they know not how to raise or employ their heart?

A. Cannot they do like Beggars or Children? If they know what they want, cannot they ask for it of God in their hearts? If the Case was but turn'd from Eternal to Temporal things, and they had encouragement from some Rich Person to ask for whatever they wanted, with the Promise of being Supply'd; would these pretend

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tend, they are not able to think of their wants, without a Book to help them ; or that they could not Ask, if they had not their Petition writ down ? No, there would none be found, but who would presently consider their Wants, and make them known. And cannot they do thus with God, who has promis'd to Hear and to Help them ? Cannot they examin their many Infirmities, and ask for the assistance of the Divine Grace to remedy every one in Particular ? Then ; Cannot they consider their Sins, and humble themselves before God, whom they have provok'd, and with true Repentance resolve upon a New life ? Cannot they reflect upon many Blessings, they have receiv'd from God, and with all their heart return thanks for them ? Cannot they offer themselves to God, and daily desire his Protection ? Cannot they turn to Christ Crucify'd, see what he Suffer'd, see the Infinit Price paid for them, Give Thanks, place their whole Confidence in the Merits of his Passion, and beseech him to be their Advocate to the Father ? This and much more may the Meanest Capacity be able to understand and do.

If they cannot do this at length ; yet
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or have not Time to Pray. 447

in short Aspirations, they may raise their hearts to God; and, if done from the heart, may be as acceptable to God, as Longer Prayer; as they may learn from the short Prayer of the Publican, *O God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

5. They may likewise imitate those begging Gripples, who lying in the streets in Silence, move Passers by to Compassion, by laying before them the misery of their Disabled, Distemper'd, or Lost Limbs. For thus might God be mov'd to Mercy, if Christians would, in the same manner, lay before him their Infirmities, tho' they should not say one word.

6. If they have opportunity, they may remember, that Prayers may be learnt without Book, as well as Songs, if they will but use the like industry, as some do in the other case.

7. They can all say the Lord's Prayer; and this may be so manag'd, that they may at any time employ half an hour, with this one Prayer alone, thus: they may repeat it Three times in Adoration of the Blessed Trinity: Five times in remembrance and Thanksgiving for the Sacred Wounds Christ receiv'd on the Cross. Five times, to beg Gods Protection for that day; as
many

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many, to ask for Mercy and Pardon of their Sins: as many, in thanksgiving for such particular Blessings or Preservations: as many, to ask for Grace, for overcoming such Particular Weaknesses or Sins, to which they observe themselves most Subject: as many, for obtaining such Virtues, which they seem most to want, Patience, Temperance, a Clean heart &c. Many other Intentions may be added, as for Relations, Friends, Enemies, for the Nation, the King, for all in Distress, in Sin, in Darkness, in Prison, for all Heretics, Jews, Turks and Unbelievers thro'-out the world. To every one of these may be added as many *Trisagions* or *Glory be to the Father*, or some other short Sentence, as *Blessed be the Holy and Undivided Trinity, now and for ever more Amen*: or, *O Jesus, in thee I put my Trust, be thou my Advocate to the Father, and obtain for me Pardon of my Sins; or Patience or Humility or a Clean heart &c.* or, *O God, be merciful to me a Sinner &c.* In this manner, may the meanest Capacity employ a Quarter or half an hour in prayer, whenever they please, without ever being at a loss, what to say. And since Christ himself was pleas'd, in his greatest distress, to repeat

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repeat the same Prayer or Words over three times in the Garden of *Gethsemane*, Mat. 26. 44. I think no Follower of his needs make a Scruple of the Repetition here advis'd. Besides these several ways something may be learnt from what is to be said to those, that follow.

Q. But what can those do, who have not time?

A. First, let them examin, whether this be not a pretext: for many half hours are Idly talk'd away by some, who cannot find time to Pray. Let them see likewise, whether with some Contrivance they may not get some Opportunities. I have seen some make great dispatch of work, when they have leave for Sports or Visits, after it is done; why not as much hast, to make place for Prayer? May not one quarter of an hour be spar'd from Sleep, either evening or morning?

2. If no Time can be found, they may have Time at least, for sending up their Sighs, their Desires, their Repentance to God, in short Aspirations, as were now mention'd in the Fourth place; for this may be in all kinds of business or work; the Heart being at
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liberty to Think, while the Hands are employ'd.

3. They may offer up all they do, to Almighty God, in Union with the Labors of Christ, while on earth.

4. They may do all, because it is the Will of God, and make their labors a Sacrifice of Obedience.

5. They may do all, because they are bound to provide for themselves or Family, and make their labors a Sacrifice of Justice.

6. They may do all, and Submit to the labors and Difficulties of their State, as to the Execution of that Sentence, which God pronounc'd against Sin, and so make all to be the Punishment of Sin.

7. They may practice *Patience, Humility &c.* under all Provocations; whether from Masters, Companions &c. They may practise Charity, in all the Opportunities, that are offer'd of Helping, Comforting, Encouraging, Excusing, Forgiving, &c. and especially to such, as are most disagreeable.

8. They may get some time on Sundays, and in the little they can do, remember the Acceptance of the Widows Mite.

In

or have not time to Pray. 451

In this manner, whatever they do may be Prayer, and their whole life an exercise of the greatest Virtues; and where then can there be reason for complaint, when the most rigorous employment cannot hinder a Christian from Serving God, if he be but willing and Industrious to do what he can?

C H A P. XVII.

Of the Sinner.

Q. **W**Hat are the Obligations of the Sinner?

A. To be converted to God, and begin a New Life.

Q. What is he to do, to become Truly Converted to God?

A. He is to ask it of God, and with all earnestness importune him, for his helping Grace; for that without this, he cannot hope to effect any thing.

Q. What Method can you prescribe him, to begin and go on with this Work?

A. I would advise him to the method prescrib'd by Christ to *Saul*, who be-

being stop'd in his Wicked course, was sent to *Ananias*, to be inform'd by him of all he was to do; *Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee, what thou must do.* Act. 9. 6. Thus should the Sinner do; find out an *Ananias*, and Sincerely desire to be inform'd by him, of what he is to do. If he Subjects himself to the Direction of such a Person, and every day, if it be possible, gives him an account of his proceeding, it will be the surest Means of Success in the Accomplishment of his Desires.

Q. Can you come to no farther Particulars?

A. Yes; I would have him, in the First, Place, Separate from all such Company, as are his usual Encouragements to Sin; for without this, there can be no hopes of effecting any thing. And if there be no other way of doing this; yet, the method people take for Health, by change of Air and Place, cannot fail; Since thus he may easily, withdraw from all the usual Provocations to Evil.

2. He ought to take some time every day for praying and Reading.

3. If he be able, it might be a great help to be liberal, in giving
Alms

to the Poor ; this being very powerful with God for Obtaining his Grace.

4. To make him serious in what he proposes, he would do well, every day, when he washes his Hands, to reflect and say, *This Flesh must certainly and soon become the Food of Worms.* As likewise, when he comes to the Fire, to say, *Eternal Fire is to be the Punishment of the Wicked : Who can be able to dwell with Everlasting Flames?*

5. He ought to use such Self-denials, as shall be judg'd proper, both for overcoming such Inclinations, as have been strengthned in him by past sins, and to prevent their drawing him again into the like Misfortunes; as also, for making some atonement for the many Transgressions, by which he has provok'd the wrath of God against him.

I only touch at these few Heads here, having given directions more at large upon this whole matter above, *Chap. 22. and 23.* to which I remit the Reader; only adding this one word to such as are concern'd, that they be mindful,

First, That True Conversion of a Sinner to, God, is a great work, both for reclaiming the Soul from the Violence

lence of Ill Habits, and for obtaining the Grace, necessary for Finishing it.

2. That if a Sinner, proposing Repentance, do's not resolve in earnest to take pains in this work, and to persevere in it, notwithstanding all the Difficulties and Discouragements he is to meet, his Purposes are in Vain, and he will for ever have the Reproach of his own Conscience to be his Confusion, who knowing his Duty and the Will of God, would not take pains to do it.

3. That if he be resolute, in pursuing what he has undertaken, he will find the Difficulties lessen upon his hands, and Divine Grace to Sweeten his Labors, so that what was at first his Trouble, will become his Comfort, and he will rejoice in whatever he has suffer'd in so good a Cause.

Lastly, That the Comforts of a Good Conscience, and the Fair Hopes of Eternal Bliss with God, are encouragements enough for this work. That if a Christian compares the Unreasonableness, the Madness, the Brutishness of Sin and of those who live in it, with the Happiness of a Soul living in Subjection to God, and waiting for the Change of Time into Eternity, there need no other

ther Motives, for breaking all the Slavish Chains of Vice, and using all necessary endeavors for obtaining the Liberty of the Children of God.

C H A P. XIX.

Of the Pastors of Christ's Church.

Q. **W**HAT are the Obligations of Pastors?

A. They are many. First, as to the Flock.

They are to Watch over the Flock committed to their Charge; and if they desire the Character of *Good Pastors*, are to give their life for their Sheep, employing it in their Service and laying it down, if it be necessary for their good. Such, as give their life for their Sheep, must be always Solicitous for their good, and must spare no pains, necessary for doing them good.

They must labor in giving them all due Instructions necessary for their Salvation :

In Preaching.

In Catechising.

In Private Exhortations, as their Particular Circumstances may require.

In

In Preaching, they are not to seek Applause or Reputation, or any ways to please men; for by so doing, they make void their Ministry, and are not the Ministers of Christ. They are not to prostitute the Word of God to Vile ends; as for managing a Party, promoting a Faction, encouraging what is sinful, encreasing Animosities, raising Jealousies, undertaking Politics, or Courting Authority for Interest or Preferment: all this is unworthy of the Gospel, Prophane and Sacrilegious: but the Only Design ought to be, in considering what may be most proper for the Hearers in order to their Eternal Good.

Catechising ought not to be omitted, because it is the best means of teaching the Flock, and instructing them in all Duties; and if this be omitted, by the Pastor's fault, I cannot see, but he must have a part in the guilt of all those, who sin or perish thro' Ignorance.

Private Exhortations are necessary, because of the Personal Exigencies or Wants of those in his Charge; as for Reproving the Disorderly, Spurring the Slothful, Comforting the Dejected, assisting the Sick, informing the Mistaken, Perswading the Obstinate, encouraging

Encouraging the Good. &c. These are the Necessities of his Flock, and if he do's not attend to them, he is not Faithful to his Undertaking, and cannot fail of having many and great Sins to Answer for, occasion'd thro' his Neglect or Silence. How many, for want of Reproving, and Repeating Reproofs! How many for want of Quickening, Spurring, Remonstrating, &c. No body knows, how Sins are Multiply'd, how the Flock is injur'd and God Dishonor'd, by these Omissions; and if Indifferency, Sloth Self-love or Worldly Business be the Occasion, the Case is clear, such are not Pastors, but Hirelings; they love themselves or this World more than their Flock; their Concern is for the Fleece and not for the Sheep.

Besides this Care, they are to Administer the Sacraments to the Faithful; being always Solicitous, that such, as present themselves, be duly prepar'd, both by the Knowledge of their Duty, and Sincere Endeavors for making their Peace with God. They are not to admit the Unworthy; and if such, as have been Notorious Offenders, approach, it is but Just, they should

publicly give proof of their Amendment, before they partake of the Sacred Mysteries: Disciplin, requires the same Method with those, who have openly profess'd an Aversion to one another; and till they are reconcil'd, they ought not to be admitted to the Holy Table.

All the Offices of the Sacred Function ought to be perform'd with such Decency, Gravity and Piety, as becomes the Ministers of God, and may be to the Edification of the Flock. *Sancta-Sancte*: Holy things are to be perform'd in a holy manner.

Prayers are to be said distinctly and devoutly? *Hast, Huddling* and *Chopping* of words, are Irreverent betray a want of Faith or Sense, and are of ill Example, to those, who are witnesses of it.

The Places of Divine Worship ought to be kept Decent, as becoming his Presence, whose Service is there perform'd; so likewise every thing belonging to the Use of the Altar and to the Worship of God; all ought to be Clean; and to permit Filth or Dirt here, discovers a want of Respect, and that we have not that concern for God, as for our selves.

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All kind of Trading and Covetousness ought to be banish'd from the Altar ; there is to be no Exaction for performing any Sacred Function ; all is to be done with the Spirit of Christ and his Apostles. And if the Poor are Neglected, because they have no Offering to make, and cannot contribute to their Subsistence, who serve the Altar, such Pastors may have the Name, but not the Spirit of Christ's Ministers ; they serve *Mammon* more than God.

§. II.

Q. If these be the Duties of Pastors, certainly they ought to be very Holy ?

A. They have a great Obligation of being so. When the Law was yet Imperfect, and the Worship of God only in Types and Shadows, God requir'd of his Priests to be Holy ; the same is much more now requir'd, in the New Law, in which both the Worship of God is more Holy, and the Dignity of the Priesthood is much greater. How great this Holiness of Pastors ought to be, may be understood from the Charge they have undertaken

dertaken, and from the Characters or Titles given them in the New Testament :

They are call'd the *Ministers of Christ*, the *Dispensers* or *Stewards* of the *Mysteries* God. 1. Cor. 4. 1.

Ambassadors for Christ, in *Christ's* stead. 2 Cor. 5. 20. *As workers together with him*. 2 Cor. 6. 1. *Kings and Priests unto God*. Rev. 5. 10.

God hath not called us to *Unclean-ness*, but to *Holiness*: He therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man but God. 1 Thess. 4. 7.

As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Joh. 20. 21.

He that *Heareth* you, *Heareth* me. Luk. 10. 16.

Ye are the Light of the World, the *Salt of the Earth*. Mat 5. 13. 14.

The Consideration of these Characters and of the Function, shew plainly the Dispositions requir'd, The Charge God has committed to the Pastors or Priests, of his Church, were it in only Teaching the Flock, would be enough to inform them of this, since they cannot be Good Lights, if they are Darkness ; neither can they Teach well, if they be not

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Living Sermons, and do not teach by Example, more than by Word.

The Scripture is very full and Positive in pressing this Point, but having lately had an occasion of shewing what the Scripture says upon this Head, I repeat not the Texts here; but however, I will conclude, but with setting down some Rules prescrib'd to Pastors or Priests of the Church by Assemblies, Synods and Councils of Bishops, and by what is Enjoyn'd in such Canons, it may easily be understood, what their Lives ought to be.

It is not lawful for Priests or any of the Clergy to keep Dogs for hunting or Hawks. *Conc. Tolet. Can. 10.* Whoever of them shall take delight in this Game, let them so long cease from their Ecclesiastical Function *Syn. Aug. can. 2. an. 952. Marisc. 388. Wormat. 868.*

It is forbid all Priests to play at Dice, and to be present at Public Shows or Balls. *Ratisb. 741. Suesb. 744. Later. 4. can. 19. Senon. 528.*

The Clergy are not in public to play at ball or other Games, especially with Laymen: they are not to play at Dice or other Games, which de-

pend on Chance; neither let them be Encouragers, Spectators or Witnesses of any others, that play. *Senon. can. 25. An. 1528.*

We forbid the Clergy all kinds of Dancing and Play, especially at Dice ——— neither do we only forbid them to play, but we will not, that they be Spectators of Gaming, nor that they permit any to play in their Houses. But, if for health sake, they at any time play at ball, or use any other sort of becoming Exercise, let them not do this in public, nor play for Money. *Med. 4. can. de armis.*

It is decreed, that no Ecclesiastic shall presume to seek to divert himself amidst those Worldly Vanities, which are usual among the Laity, as in Hunting, or in Vain Songs, or in dissolute or Immoderate Liberties, in Music or such like Entertainments. *Gonc. Forojul. c. 6. An. 791.*

We forbid the Clergy, especially those, who have the Orders of Priesthood, to play at Dice or Cards. *Syn. Lingon. 1404. Senon. 1524.*

No Ministers of the Altar, nor any of the Clergy are to be present at any

Comedies or shews. *Conc. Load. art. 320. c. 54.*

Let the Clergy never put on Vizors, nor Act Comedies, Dances, or any other Entertainment, belonging to the Stage; neither let them be Spectators of them. Let them wholly abstain from Dice, Cards and all other Forbidden and unbecoming Divertisements, both in public and private. *Con. Burdig. an. 1583. devit. cler.*

We ordain, that Prelates be exact and Watchful in punishing Clerks, especially Priests, who hunt. *Conc. Nannet. an. 1264.*

Let not Presbyters be present at any Banquets, that are not Sober, neither let them provoke others to drink. We forbid them entrance into all Public houses, except Necessity obliges them to do it on a journey; *Conc. Mediol. 1. Tit. de Armis &c.*

Let them never enter into Taverns or Inns, except forced to it by a long journey; let them never be present at Entertainments, or at any Table, where Sobriety and Moderation are not observ'd. *Conc. Burdig. an. 1583.*

Let not the Clergy be present at the Entertainments of the Laity, because it is not becoming and brings them in-

to Contempt. *Con. Raven. 3. an. 1311.*
 And that their Eyes and Ears, which
 are consecrated to Sacred Mysterics,
 may not be polluted with the Filth of
 what it is not fit for them to see or hear.
Conc. Agath. c. 26.

The Holy Synod has decreed, that
 for the future, no Bishop, Priest, or
 Monk presume to hire Lands, or un-
 dertake any Worldly Business. *Conc.*
Chalced. Act. 15. C. 3. Ann. 1552.

No man that warreth to God (in
 undertaking the Ministry) entangleth
 himself with the affairs of this life:
 therefore we decree, that no Priest
 undertake Secular business; and if he
 shall otherwise, let him be degraded.
Conc. Mediol. 1. And this is most strictly
 forbid by the Council, under the penal-
 ty of being Anathema. *Conc. Narbon*
1551.

Let none of the Clergy walk in Fairs
 or markets, except upon business; if
 they shall do otherwise, let them be
 degraded. *Conc. Carthag. 4. c. 48.*

These are some Canons or Rules
 compos'd for the Clergy, in which it
 is plain, that as they are taken from
 out of the People for those things,
 which belong to God, so their lives
 ought to be very different from the
 pro-

People, that is, Holy in all things; as their Function is Holy. It is not therefore for them to consider, what is in it self Lawful or Indifferent, or what the Laity may do without Sin; they are to consider farther, what is *Becoming, Agreeable* or *Permitted* to the Sanctity of their Character; and examining by this Rule, they will find themselves under great Restraints, where others plead liberty, and that of all the things, that are Lawful, all are not Expedient. Thus the Scripture, thus the Primitive Fathers declare at large, and thus the Bishops of the Church, whose proper business it is to inspect and speak in this matter, have in all ages publish'd their Sentiments, and not only publish'd, but likewise enforc'd them by Orders, by decrees, by commands and by Penalties; by these means endeavoring to make the Clergy Sensible of the Sanctity of their Profession, and how much their lives ought to be above the Laity, while they see so many things allow'd, and Lawful in the Laity, under severe Penalties declar'd Unlawful in them.

Not that it can be pretended, that these Sanctions of National Synods, and in matters of Disciplin, are a Law to

to all of this Character ; It is enough, that they are the Sentiments and Decrees of so many Learn'd Prelates, in so many several Nations, and in so many different Ages of the Church, giving their Judgments, not in any National concern, nor in a Point controverted or disputed, but of the Sanctity of the Priestly Function, and of what things are becoming or not becoming the Sanctity of it : this is enough to give Authority to their Judgments, to gain Respect to their Decrees, and to make thole tremble, who live not according to these Rules. This Authority and Respect are much Strengthened, by the Concurring Vote of the last General Assembly, which not only approves, but ratifies all the Decrees, which had been made in these National Synods, upon this Subject ; which being not a part of Controversy, and therefore not likely to give offence to any Party, I here set down at length, for their fuller information, who are willing to know their Duty and to do it.

Conc.

Conc. Trid. Sefs. 22. c. I.

*The Canons of the Life and Good
Behavior of the Clergy are
renew'd.*

There is nothing more effectually moves others to Piety and to the Worship of God, than their Life and Example, who have undertaken the Sacred Ministry for since they are become more Remarkable, by being rais'd above the things of this World, they have the Eyes of all turn'd upon them, as to a Light, and their Example is made the Measure for a general Imitation. Wherefore it becomes all the Clergy, who are call'd into the Lot of our Lord, so to frame their Life and Morals, that in their Habit, Behavior, manner of Walking, Discourse and all other things they shew nothing, but what is Grave, Moderate and Religious. And as for lesser Failings, which in them would be very Great, they are to be careful to be exempt from them. In as much therefore as the Good and Beauty of the Church of God has the greater dependance on these things,
so

so the Exactness in observing them ought to be very great: the Holy Synod decrees, that whatsoever has been formerly and fully ordain'd by the Chief Bishops and Sacred Councils, concerning the life of the Clergy, their Good Behavior, Dress and Learning, as also of their avoiding Excess, Feasting, Dancing, Dice, Gaming and all sorts of Crimes, and likewise of not Engaging in Secular business, the same be for the future observ'd, under the same Penalties, or greater, to be inflicted, at the Discretion of the Ordinary. Neither let any Appeal hinder the putting this in Execution, which belongs to the reformation of Manners. And if it shall be found, that any of these Canons have not been in force, let them be forthwith reviv'd, and due care us'd, that they be by all rigorously observ'd, all Customs whatever notwithstanding, that so the Prelates may not find God the Just Avenger of the un-reform'd lives of those under their charge.

In this manner are the above mention'd Canons reviv'd and confirm'd and for preventing all Exception, the very Councils are nam'd in the Margin. *Carthag. Chalced. Arel. Matisse* And
Sess.

Sess. 24. c. 12. The like Order is again repeated to the Dignify'd Clergy, with these Particular Injunctions; That they use a Decent habit both in and out of the Church; That they abstain from unlawful Hunting, Fowling, Dancing, Taverns and Gaming, and that their lives be above reproof: citing again *Conc. Turon.* and *Agath.*

Much more might be here inserted, but this may suffice: the Rule is plain, the reasons are above dispute, and the good effects of it cannot be question'd, that as many, as live by it, will not only be Honorable before men, but will be of great Authority with the Flock, and will have God to be the Rewarder. And as for such, as observe it not, I think I may positively say it, they cannot fail of being Unhappy: Unhappy in not regarding the Sentiments and Directions of so many Learned and Pious Prelates; Unhappy in losing all Respects with their Flock; Unhappy, in disabling themselves from doing good to those under their Charge, and Unhappy in bringing their Ministry into Contempt. These Consequences cannot be doubted by those, who seriously consider the great Sanctity and Duties of this Profession; and whoever examines
the

the Conditions requir'd by S. Paul, 2 Cor. 6. 3. that the Ministry be not blamed or dishonor'd, must conclude, That tho' many Reasons are alledg'd for the Contempt of the Clergy, there needs no other to be enquir'd after, besides this One; That the Clergy do not live, as becomes their Profession: for tho' there may be many others concurring with this; yet it must be own'd, that this alone is enough to bring them into Contempt; and, that, were all other Reasons remov'd, their esteem will never be more than Common, if they live in Common with others.



FINIS

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2. Instructions for the whole Year,
Part 2d, being practical thoughts on
the Epistles of all the Sundays and
moveable Feasts from the Octave of
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3. Instructions for the whole Year,
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A Catalogue.

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